

DANBURY BRANCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TASK 5

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

STATE PROJECT 302-008



SECTION 16: SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

JUNE 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic resources of concern for the EIS include the residents, workers, employers, and communities/neighborhoods within the study corridor. Consequently, the analysis of existing socio-economic conditions for the Danbury Branch Line study corridor considered the following aspects:

- Socioeconomics demographics, school enrollment data, real estate trends and values
- Environmental Justice locations with concentrations of environmental justice (low income and minority) populations
- Community Cohesion neighborhoods and their characteristics including resources such as schools, libraries and community centers within the study corridor
- Businesses major employers, employment by sector (job type), commuting patterns, business climate and any planned and programmed businesses and commercial centers within the study corridor
- Municipal Services and Finances emergency services, water and sewer service areas, school bus routes within the study corridor, and municipal grand list values

For each aspect, conditions are discussed by community, from south to north along the corridor. The study corridor falls within two planning regions: the Southwestern Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA) region, which includes Norwalk and Wilton, and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) region, which includes the other six municipalities in the study corridor. Socioeconomic data for the planning regions and for the State of Connecticut as a whole are also presented, where relevant and available, for context.

Most of the socioeconomic data was collected in summer of 2008. It is reflective of economic conditions leading up to that time. The recession of the economy in late 2008 may have changed some of these conditions. However, the data still provides a reasonable baseline for comparing relative conditions within the study corridor and analyzing potential project impacts.

Regulatory Context

Federally funded projects such as the Danbury Line Improvements need to comply with federal regulations related to environmental justice. Environmental justice calls for the evaluation of projects to see if there is a disproportionately high burden of adverse environmental impacts on under-represented groups, specifically minority and/or low-income people. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has a policy to insure nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations which requires federal agencies to identify and address such disproportionate impacts. Project compliance with these requirements will be considered in this DEIS. No other state or federal regulations relative to socio-economic resources are applicable to this study.

Methods, Coordination, and Data Sources

Information on existing socio-economic conditions was derived from existing publications, field review, and personal interviews with municipal and regional planning agency staff. Data sources included the U.S. Census 2000, Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), Connecticut State Data Center (CtSDC), municipal websites, local plans of conservation and development, regional long-range plans, local economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, local school district strategic plans, and municipal annual reports. A complete list of data sources is included in the References section.

The two regional planning agencies (SWRPA and HVCEO) which member towns fall within the study area have produced a number of reports with useful data on socioeconomic conditions in their respective regions. Those used in this analysis are included in the bibliography to this technical memorandum. In particular, each agency has published a regional housing needs assessment within the past 18 to 24 months. These reports are worth noting because they are very recent and because they reflect the emphasis of SWRPA and HVCEO on local housing availability as an important community issue. These reports, which focus on affordable housing supply and demand, were consulted for comparison purposes for this analysis. The data they contain is consistent with that examined from other sources used in this analysis with some minor exceptions. The SWRPA Regional Housing Needs Assessment (SWRPA - August, 2007) for example, cites a median house price in the region that is slightly less in Wilton and Norwalk than the median price quoted by CERC and local realtors. However, the differences are statistically insignificant.

The multiple reports reviewed for this socioeconomic conditions assessment, such as the housing needs studies, often had data with the same origins or covered the same topics but were aggregated differently or cited from different periods in time in each document. Whenever possible, the most current data and/or data that most directly addressed the topic under discussion were used. Where data from multiple reports had the same origins, it was cited from the source material (such as 2000 U.S. Census) rather than the second-hand document source. A complete list of data sources is included in the References section.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Danbury Branch Line study corridor has two relatively distinct sub-areas in terms of socio-economic conditions. One is the southern portion of the corridor, from Norwalk to Danbury, distinguished by urban cores where the majority of economic activity takes place, surrounded by suburban areas. The other is the northern portion of the corridor, from Danbury to New Milford, distinguished by relatively rural characteristics and an economic base that is in transition.

It is notable that all of the corridor communities are in Fairfield County except for New Milford. Fairfield County is one of the wealthiest counties in the country in terms of housing values and per-capita income, ranking fifth in the U.S. in 2005 (US Census). Fairfield County median housing prices and incomes are highest in the southern portion of the corridor. This portion has close economic ties to New York City and Westchester County (New York), in terms of jobs, as

well as ties to long-standing employment centers along Interstate 95 (I-95) from Bridgeport (Connecticut) to Manhattan (New York).

The northern portion of the study corridor, from Danbury to New Milford, is historically rural with residential and agricultural lands, and some mix of industrial development. As Danbury has experienced rapid growth over the past 25 years, land, housing, and general development costs there have escalated. As a result, the relatively undeveloped communities to the north, including Brookfield and New Milford, have become much more attractive for new businesses and housing. Thus, the northern corridor has been transitioning from an agricultural and industrial-based economy to a more diverse mix of economic activity. Much of this change is located along the Route 7 corridor from Brookfield to New Milford, where rapid commercial development has produced numerous shopping plazas and big-box retailers.

Socioeconomics

This section discusses the following topics:

- Demographics
- School enrollment and budget data
- Real estate trends and values

<u>Demographics</u>

Demographics are the physical and social characteristics of people, such as age, income, employment status, family size, and others. Tables 1 and 2 below summarize demographic data for the study corridor municipalities, showing population, income, and employment characteristics.

As evident in Table 1, Norwalk and Danbury are urban centers with populations of over 70,000. The other six communities are distinctly smaller, ranging from a low of approximately 8,000 residents in Bethel to a high of approximately 27,000 residents in New Milford (US Census 2000). All of the municipalities are projected to grow over the next 30 years except for Redding, which is projected to lose population. From 16 to 25 percent of each community's population is of school age. The majority of the population in the corridor, from 58 to 67 percent within each community, is of employment age, suggesting an associated demand for transportation options for travel to work.

As shown in Table 2, median household (HH) incomes in the corridor are higher than the state average (\$65,859), except in Danbury, which is just slightly lower (\$65,161). Also shown in Table 2, unemployment is generally low in the corridor communities, ranging from 2.8 to 3.6 percent, below the state average of 4.3 percent. Poverty levels (the percent of the population below poverty) are close to the state average of 7.9 percent in Norwalk (7.2 percent) and Danbury (8.0 percent), but far below the state average in the six other communities, ranging from a low of 1.8 percent in Redding to 3.3 percent in New Milford.

Table 1: Population Data

	Total Po	pulation	Projected	Median	Age 5-17	Age 18-	Age 65+	Average
	2000	2007	Growth 2000-2030	Age (2007)	(2000)	64 (2000)	(2000)	HH Size (2007)
Norwalk	82,951	84,692	16.6%	39	25%	65%	13%	2.6
Wilton	17,633	18,144	30.4%	42	22%	58%	12%	3.1
Redding	8,270	8,590	-12.6%	43	21%	62%	11%	2.9
Ridgefield	23,643	24,073	18.2%	42	22%	60%	11%	2.9
Bethel	18,067	18,307	49.7%	39	20%	63%	10%	2.9
Danbury	74,848	78,765	19.6%	37	16%	67%	12%	2.8
Brookfield	15,664	16,210	26.0%	41	20%	62%	11%	2.9
New Milford	27,121	28,950	30.9%	39	18%	66%	10%	2.7
Connecticut	3,405,565	3,549,606	14.2%	n/a	17%	53.0%	14%	2.7

Sources: CtSDC 2008, CERC 2007, US Census 2000

 Table 2: Income and Employment

	Median HH Income (2007)	% Below Poverty (2000)	Employed Persons (2006)	Percent Unemployed (2006)
Norwalk	\$72,756	7.2%	46,701	3.6%
Wilton	\$176,384	2.9%	8,099	2.9%
SWRPA Region	\$114,502	5.6%	174,178	2.5%
Redding	\$128,870	1.8%	4,421	2.8%
Ridgefield	\$134,367	2.4%	11,413	2.8%
Bethel	\$84,641	2.5%	7,348	3.2%
Danbury	\$65,161	8.0%	42,478	3.4%
Brookfield	\$99,196	2.3%	8,715	3.2%
New Milford	\$81,618	3.3%	16,324	3.3%
HVCEO Region	\$81,329	4.4%	110,894	2.2%
Connecticut	\$65,859	7.9%	1,765,083	4.3%

Source: US Census 2000; CERC

School Enrollment and Budget Data

General data on the school enrollments and budgets in the study corridor communities are provided in Table 3. Enrollments tend to vary with population size of the community. Expenditures per student are close to or higher than the state average throughout the corridor.

School enrollment trends are published by the Connecticut State Data Center (CtSDC). The CtSDC anticipates that total public school enrollment in Connecticut will decline from 567,138 in 2007 to 458,900 in 2030 (20 percent decrease). This projected decline is based on several factors, including lower birth rates among Connecticut families, general aging of the state population, and a persistent pattern of out-migration which has not been offset by new immigrant and/or in-migrating populations. Trends in the CtSDC projections of student–age population (age 4 to 19) by town, for the period 2007 – 2030, follow.

- Slight decline in student-age populations: in Bethel and Danbury
- Student-age populations will stay essentially the same: in Norwalk, Wilton, Redding and Ridgefield
- 10 percent or less growth in student-age population: in Brookfield and New Milford

Table 3: School Enrollments and Finances 2006-2007

	School Enrollment	Schools Budget	Spending Per Student	No. of Schools
Norwalk	11,141	\$147,489,000	\$13,238.40	19
Wilton	4,230	\$56,671,000	\$13,397.40	5
Redding	1,802	\$25,409,000	\$14,115.00	2
Ridgefield	5,533	\$65,631,000	\$11,861.74	9
Bethel	3,260	\$36,082,000	\$11,068.10	5
Danbury	9,754	\$106,031,000	\$10,870.51	18
Brookfield	3,120	\$33,421,000	\$10,711.86	4
New Milford	5,235	\$51,947,000	\$9,923.02	6
Connecticut	567,138	n/a	\$10,837.00	[avg. 2002]

Source: CtSDC – Strategic School Profiles

Real Estate Trends and Values

This section describes housing supply, housing characteristics, housing prices and residential development patterns in the study corridor communities. Housing supply refers to the change in number of residential units in a community over time. Housing characteristics can be defined by the total number of units in a community, owner-occupied vs. rental units, the number of vacant housing units, and the average number of people living in each household (HH). Residential development patterns are characterized by the predominant type of housing present in an area, whether they occur in single-type or mixed-type clusters, and trends in housing construction in the community.

Data on housing supply in the study corridor communities are shown in Table 4. Overall, the total number of housing units in the study corridor communities grew collectively between 2000 and 2007 by 5.7 percent. The largest growth in terms of net gain was in Danbury with 2,509 new units. The study corridor predominantly has owner-occupied and single-family housing. The highest rates of renter-occupied housing are in Norwalk (36.9 percent) and Danbury (39.8 percent), exceeding the state average of 31.2 percent. The percent of housing units that are vacant in each of the study area communities (as documented in Table 6) is comparatively low compared to the statewide average of 6.1 percent, except for in New Milford (6.5 percent). The 2006 median house prices reported by CERC were well above the state median of \$275,000 in all of the corridor communities.

Table 4: Housing Supply and Percent Change 2000 to 2007

Municipality	Housing Units		Demolitions	Est. Housing	Percent change
	2000	2000-2007	2000-2007	Units 2007	2000 to 2007
Norwalk	33,753	1,524	211	35,066	3.9%
Wilton	6,113	239	166	6,186	1.2%
Redding	3,086	289	31	3,344	8.4%
Ridgefield	8,877	434	118	9,193	3.6%
Bethel	6,653	362	38	6,977	4.9%
Danbury	28,519	2,572	63	31,028	8.8%
Brookfield	5,781	443	44	6,180	6.9%
New Milford	10,710	826	77	11,459	7.0%
TOTAL	103,492	6,689	748	109,433	5.7%

Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), SWRPA and HVCEO **A single permit may cover/include multiple dwelling units

The gain in new housing units in the corridor communities between 2000 and 2005 per capita is shown in Table 5. Danbury and Norwalk had by far the greatest number of new units constructed. However, Redding, Danbury and New Milford had the most growth in housing units relative to their population sizes in 2000.

Table 5: Housing Stock Growth Compared to Median Home Price and Household Income

	Household Population (2000)	Household Population (2005)	New Units 2000-2005	New Units per capita (2000)	Median Home Price (2006)	Median HH Income (2006)
Norwalk	82,086	84,225	1063	.013	\$545,000	\$72,756
Wilton	17,226	18,092	36	.002	\$940,000	\$176,384
Redding	8,264	8,505	217	.026	\$675,000	\$128,870
Ridgefield	23, 461	24,275	163	.007	\$779,500	\$134,367
Bethel	17,952	18,957	258	.014	\$378,500	\$84,641
Danbury	71,720,	74,707	1687	.024	\$365,000	\$65,161
Brookfield	15,586	16,313	297	.019	\$440,000	\$99,196
New Milford	26,861	28,347	567	.021	\$359,270	\$81,618

Source: U.S Census, CERC, and CtSDC

Data on housing characteristics and prices in the study corridor communities are shown in Tables 6 and 7. In general, housing prices have continued to remain comparatively high and vacancy rates relatively low within the study corridor communities over time, yet housing sales overall have declined. A recent market report (Prudential Real Estate, June 2008) documented real estate sales trends in Fairfield County, which includes all of the corridor towns except New Milford. Due to the proximity of New Milford and its predominant north-south connections with the rest of the corridor, the trends noted in the report are likely to reflect conditions in New Milford as well. The report noted that sales for both single-family homes and condominium units have been down about 30 percent in 2008 compared to 2007. Median home sale prices have adjusted downward slightly and price ranges that are selling most actively have also shifted downward. New home permits have continued to drop from 2007 (down about 30%), with a 2008 projection of about 5,400 new residential permits statewide. This is reflective of national trends in the housing market and economy. The report states "There is no over-supply of new homes on the market." The report's 2007-2008 single-family home sales statistics for the corridor communities in Fairfield County are shown in Table 7.

Table 6: Housing Characteristics

		20	000	5	2007	2005	2006
	Housing Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied	% Vacant	Average HH Size	Housing Units	Median House Price
Norwalk	33,753	60.0%	36.9%	3.1%	2.7	34,816	\$545,000
Wilton	6,113	88.0%	9.1%	3.1%	3.1	6,149	\$940,000
Redding	3,086	85.0%	9.3%	5.5%	2.9	3,303	\$675,000
Ridgefield	8,877	81.0%	14.0%	5.0%	2.9	9,040	\$779,500
Bethel	6,653	75.0%	23.0%	2.2%	2.9	6,911	\$378,500
Danbury	28,519	56.0%	39.8%	4.7%	2.8	30,206	\$365,000
Brookfield	5,781	86.0%	10.5%	3.6%	2.9	6,078	\$440,000
New Milford	10,710	73.0%	21.0%	6.5%	2.7	11,277	\$359,270
SWRPA Region	139,224	65%	31%	4%	n/a		
HVCEO Region	79,760	72%	22.5%	5.5%	n/a		
Connecticut	1,385,975	63.0%	31.2%	6.1%	2.7	1,431,569	\$275,000

Source: US Census 2000; CERC 2007

Table 7: Single-Family Home Sales Trends for Study Corridor Communities in Fairfield County, 2007-2008

Community	Days on Market 2007	Days on Market 2008	%∆	Median Sales Price 2007	Median Sales Price 2008	%∆	Sales 2007	Sales 2008	%∆
Bethel	101	137	35.6%	\$380,000	\$360,000	-5.3%	68	55	-19.1%
Brookfield	121	141	16.5%	\$451,000	\$432,500	-4.1%	74	73	-1.4%
Danbury	121	125	3.3%	\$363,000	\$335,000	-7.7%	203	152	-25.1%
Norwalk	125	128	2.4%	\$550,000	\$520,000	-5.5%	319	182	-42.9%
Redding	150	180	20.0%	\$768,000	\$677,500	-11.8%	54	36	-33.3%
Ridgefield	136	138	1.5%	\$770,800	\$725,000	-5.9%	182	117	-35.7%
Wilton	135	165	22.2%	\$932,000	\$1,014,000	8.8%	115	68	-40.9%

Source: Prudential Real Estate 2008

The communities that comprise the study corridor generally reflect a traditional residential development pattern of suburban low-density, single-family, residential subdivisions surrounding town or city centers. The more urban centers in Norwalk and Danbury include neighborhoods of mixed residential uses, with two- and three-family homes as well as single-family homes on individual lots. Both Danbury and Norwalk have seen recent proposals for mixed-use developments, combining apartments, condominiums, single-family homes, commercial uses, and office space (HVCEO and City of Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, personal communications). Examples of these types of developments include the "95/7" development programmed for construction in Norwalk. Each is mixed-use (residential and commercial) with set-aside areas for both rental and owner-occupied units.

Data on housing construction trends in the corridor communities are shown in Table 8. While single family home construction remains the strongest housing market in the study corridor, the

market for multi-family units has been growing. According to 2007 data compiled by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD, 2008), nearly 36 percent of new structures built in 2007 were multi-family units as compared with 12 percent in 1997. Growth in new multi-family units with structures of five (5) units or more was strongest in Brookfield, Ridgefield, and Danbury, while Norwalk had the largest number of new two-family homes built in 2007.

Table 8: Housing Construction 2007

Permit-issuing Places	Total	1 Unit	2 Unit	3 and 4 Units	5 Units or More
Norwalk	95	51	14	4	26
Wilton	27	27	0	0	0
Redding	3	3	0	0	0
Ridgefield	107	57	0	0	50
Bethel	8	8	0	0	0
Danbury	290	236	4	7	43
Brookfield	127	25	0	0	102
New Milford	34	32	2	0	0
Connecticut	7,746	5,348	250	128	2,020

Source: DECD data online 2008

Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifies that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from particip ation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discriminati on under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, issued in 1998, states that each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activ ities on minority populati ons and low-income populations.

In order to evaluate the Danbury Branch Line Improvements for the purposes of environmental justice, U.S. Census Bureau (Census) data (2000) were used to determine the presence and locations of minority and low-income populations within the study corridor. The data collection effort focused on the census tracts (survey areas for the Census) that fall within or partially within the corridor. A person from a minority is essentially someone from a non-white ethnic background. The definition used for low-income corresponds to an income at or below the poverty level. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) calculated the 2000 poverty level to be an income of \$14,150 or less for a family of three. Environmental justice is considered to be a potential issue when there is a concentration of minority or low-income populations in the study area.

Two different methodologies were considered when identifying possible environmental justice populations in the study corridor. The first was the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance. The CEQ identifies an EJ group where the proportion (percentage) of the

minority or below-poverty population in an area is "meaningfully greater" than the percentage in the broader (larger) area. The second method is SWRPA's adopted approach to identify "communities of concern" for their planning purposes, which SWRPA developed after researching a range of EJ thresholds used by other regional planning agencies and state and federal transportation agencies. SWRPA's approach is very similar to the CEQ guidance. SWRPA considers an EJ population to exist where the percentage of the low-income or minority population in a given census tract is greater than the mean (average) percentage for that population in the region as a whole. Based on their findings, SWRPA established a threshold percentage for minority populations at 25.4 percent and a threshold percentage for low income (below-poverty) populations at 5.7 percent. The methodologies of both agencies were considered in order to identify potential EJ populations in the Danbury Branch study corridor.

Table 9 shows the proportion of the population that is minority and below poverty within the study corridor communities, within each planning region, and within the State of Connecticut. It also shows the minority and below-poverty proportions for the subset (combined data) of census tracts located within or overlapping (partially within) the study corridor in each community.

Looking at the community-wide data, almost all of the communities in the study corridor have a substantially lower percentage of below-poverty population than the state average of 7.9 percent. Danbury is the sole community with a higher percentage, 8.0 percent. Both Norwalk and Danbury have higher percentages of minority residents, 27 and 25 percent respectively, than the state average of 19 percent. The data for these cities was examined more closely for potential EJ populations. None of the other communities have population characteristics indicative of EJ populations.

When examining the data in more detail, it is clear that the census tracts within the study corridor in Norwalk and Danbury have higher concentrations of minority and below-poverty populations than the state average, the city-wide average, and the region-wide averages. The Norwalk census tracts in the corridor (combined) have 39 percent minority and 10.7 percent below poverty, compared to 27 percent minority and 7.2 percent below poverty city-wide and 19 percent minority and 5.6 percent below poverty in the SWRPA region. The Danbury census tracts in the corridor (combined) have 30 percent minority and 9.5 percent below poverty, compared to 25 percent minority and 8 percent below poverty city-wide and 12 percent minority and 4.4 percent below poverty in the HVCEO region. These concentrations indicate potential environmental justice (EJ) populations in the Norwalk and Danbury portions of the study corridor.

Table 9: Minority and Below-Poverty-Level Populations in the Study Corridor Communities and Census Tracts

	Total	%	% Below
	Population	Minority	Poverty
Norwalk	82,951	27.0%	7.2%
Norwalk Census Tracts in Corridor	24,815	39.1%	10.7%
Wilton	17,633	7.0%	2.9%
Wilton Census Tracts in Corridor	13,434	4.8%	3.4%
SWRPA Region	353,556	19.1%	5.6%
Redding	8,270	6.0%	1.8%
Redding Census Tracts in Corridor.	3,816	2.3%	1.2%
Ridgefield	23,643	6.0%	2.4%
Ridgefield Census Tracts in Corridor	17,049	3.5%	3.1%
Bethel	18,067	10.0%	2.5%
Bethel Census Tracts in Corridor	13,246	8.2%	3.2%
Danbury	74,848	25.0%	8.0%
Danbury Census Tracts in Corridor	28,703	30.2%	9.5%
Brookfield	15,664	4.4%	2.3%
Brookfield Census Tracts in Corridor	15,664	4.4%	2.3%
New Milford	27,121	6.0%	3.3%
New Milford Census Tracts in Corridor	24,906	5.7%	3.2%
HVCEO Region	212,248	11.9%	4.4%
Connecticut	3,405,565	19.0%	7.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000

The detailed data for ethnicity and below-poverty populations for the Norwalk and Danbury census tracts in the study corridor are shown in Table 10. The corresponding census tracts with potential EJ populations in Norwalk and Danbury are identified on the attached maps.

It is notable that the location of EJ populations in the study corridor correlates closely with the concentrations of families without an automobile, based on the 2000 Census sample data for households with no car. As much as 30 percent of the families in the corridor census tracts in Norwalk and up to 19 percent in Danbury have no car. This may indicate a high level of dependence on alternate modes of transportation in these areas.

Table 10: Detailed Data on Ethnicity and Below-Poverty Populations in Danbury and Norwalk Study Area Census Tracts; Shaded Data Indicates Minority and Below-Poverty Environmental Justice Populations

NORWALK	Total	Tract 425	Tract 427	Tract 428	Tract 429	Tract 430	Tract 433	Tract 434	Tract 436
2000 Population	62,278	3,694	4,300	4,501	1,581	3,020	3,057	4,509	2,921
White alone	36,586	3,367	3,528	3,656	1,432	2,582	2,205	2,182	2,208
Black or African American alone	10,867	147	213	281	0	192	211	829	258
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	104	15	13	23	0	0	0	30	0
Asian alone	2,021	61	150	156	21	127	120	271	140
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	13	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0
Some other race alone	65	7	4	0	0	0	6	5	0
Two or more races	1,386	68	45	21	21	11	145	150	30
Hispanic or Latino	11,236	29	347	364	107	108	357	1,042	285
Hispanic/Latino Sub-groups									
White alone	6,920	18	147	251	65	65	231	586	253
Black or African American alone	340	0	0	0	0	7	0	15	0
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	36	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some other race alone	3,252	11	170	96	32	36	105	347	32
Two or more races	695	0	31	17	10	0	21	94	0
Minority (non-white alone)	25,692	327	772	845	149	438	852	2,327	713
% Minority	41.25%	8.85%	17.95%	18.77%	9.42%	14.50%	27.87%	51.61%	24.41%
Below Poverty (1999)	5,096	63	127	170	54	113	229	479	205
% Below Poverty	8.18%	1.71%	2.95%	3.78%	3.42%	3.74%	7.49%	10.62%	7.02%

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 10 (continued)

NORWALK (continued)	Tract 437	Tract 438	Tract 439	Tract 440	Tract 441	Tract 442	Tract 444	Tract 445
2000 Population	1,815	7,437	5,087	5,912	3,410	4,148	3,598	3,288
White alone	709	4,052	3,717	2,244	814	2,560	963	367
Black or African American alone	570	1,110	557	1,604	1,234	499	1,617	1,545
American Indian and Alaska Native								
alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	8
Asian alone	0	546	87	125	0	108	85	24
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific								
Islander alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some other race alone	0	31	6	0	6	0	0	0
Two or more races	27	201	141	224	42	66	121	73
Hispanic or Latino	509	1,497	579	1,715	1,314	915	797	1,271
Hispanic/Latino Sub-groups								
White alone	373	915	296	1,111	854	649	394	712
Black or African American								
alone	14	26	55	38	56	14	46	69
American Indian and Alaska								
Native alone	0	24	0	6	0	0	0	0
Asian alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian and Other								
Pacific Islander alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some other race alone	105	459	114	489	374	248	276	358
Two or more races	17	73	114	71	30	4	81	132
Minority (non-white alone)	1,106	3,385	1,370	3,668	2,596	1,588	2,635	2,921
% Minority	60.94%	45.52%	26.93%	62.04%	76.13%	38.28%	73.24%	88.84%
Below Poverty (1999)	169	599	207	676	752	323	532	398
% Below Poverty	9.31%	8.05%	4.07%	11.43%	22.05%	7.79%	14.79%	12.10%

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 10 (continued)

DANDUDY	TD 4.1	Tract							
DANBURY	Total	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2114
2000 Population	49,469	6,222	6,449	5,131	6,874	5,540	6,185	9,041	4,027
White alone	30,680	2,697	3,158	3,582	4,259	4,799	3,737	4,963	3,485
Black or African American	2 467	262	527	200	562	00	513	064	1.40
alone American Indian and Alaska	3,467	362	537	289	563	90	313	964	149
Native alone	97	0	0	0	0	60	13	24	0
Asian alone	2,550	354	283	422	533	165	449	257	87
Native Hawaiian and Other	2,330	334	203	722	333	103	777	231	07
Pacific Islander alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Some other race alone	1,245	386	152	95	213	31	157	211	0
Two or more races	1,424	234	269	117	198	50	93	342	121
Hispanic or Latino	10,006	2,189	2,050	626	1,108	345	1,223	2,280	185
Hispanic/Latino Sub-groups									
White alone	4,791	1,007	972	279	502	234	570	1,147	80
Black or African									
American alone	172	0	12	0	0	21	66	73	0
American Indian and									
Alaska Native alone	54	0	31	11	5	0	7	0	0
Asian alone	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian and									
Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
alone	0	1.000	0	0	0	0	206	0	0
Some other race alone	4,037	1,069	856	336	422	69	396	857	32 73
Two or more races	940	113	167	0	179	21	184	203	
Minority (non-white alone)	18,789	3,525	3,291	1,549	2,615	741	2,448	4,078	542
% Minority	37.98%	56.65%	51.03%	30.19%	38.04%	13.38%	39.58%	45.11%	13.46%
Below Poverty (1999)	4,791	1,065	591	306	610	187	568	1,311	153
% Below Poverty	9.68%	17.12%	9.16%	5.96%	8.87%	3.38%	9.18%	14.50%	3.80%

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Community Cohesion

Community cohesion refers to the sense of togetherness exhibited by members of a community. It is characterized by residents' expression of common belonging or unity within a specified geographic area, and is typically related to common experiences such as similar lifestyles, similar family structure, common values, and shared goals for their community. Key elements of community cohesion considered for this DEIS include:

- Neighborhoods within or abutting the study corridor
- Community resources within those neighborhoods

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are generally defined in three ways. First, they can be identified by municipal governments for planning, urban renewal, political, or service purposes (such as sewer service areas). Secondly, neighborhoods may be defined by residents who live there and who identify themselves as living within a cohesive area where they have a sense of belonging or closeness. Finally, neighborhoods may be defined by homeowner or business owner associations encompassing a discrete area in a community. Many community downtowns or other commercial core areas are geographically synonymous with or overlap one or more neighborhoods. These are locations where there is a mix of housing and businesses that have become cohesive due to their interrelationships, yet which have businesses serving both the neighborhood residents as well as the community at large. Some of the neighborhoods noted below are, therefore, also listed as commercial centers in this study.

Neighborhoods located entirely or partially within the study corridor were identified through municipal websites, as well as through discussions with municipal planning, community development, and economic development staff. The approximate locations of these neighborhoods are shown as point locations in the attached maps. Point locations are used because most of the neighborhoods (with the exception of those located in Norwalk) do not have specific boundaries mapped by the community.

Norwalk

The City of Norwalk is the single municipality in the study corridor which is organized into neighborhoods for planning, urban renewal, and project programming purposes. Many Norwalk neighborhoods are also represented by neighborhood associations. Norwalk has a Norwalk Housing Partnership (within the City of Norwalk Economic Development Office) as well as a Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations, each of which maintains a website with information about Norwalk's neighborhoods. Within Norwalk, the rail line traverses the following neighborhoods:

• South Norwalk (SoNo) – the area surrounding the South Norwalk rail station. Major neighborhood streets include Washington Street, Water Street, North Main Street, Day Street, and Monroe Street.

- Norwalk Center a traditional commercial center of Norwalk framed by Route 7, the rail line, and I-95. Major neighborhood streets include Wall Street, Belden Avenue, West Avenue, Berkeley Street, Academy Street, and Harbor Avenue.
- Cranbury a suburban neighborhood on the northeast side of Norwalk. Major neighborhood streets include Chestnut Hill Avenue, Newtown Avenue, Grumman Avenue, and Toilsome Avenue.

Wilton

• Wilton Center – a cohesive cluster of retail stores, restaurants and banks intermingled with community institutions such as the library; it is situated adjacent to Route 7 and the rail line.

Redding

• West Redding – a small cohesive cluster of small retail stores surrounding the Redding train station and post office.

Ridgefield

• Branchville – a cluster of businesses and homes centered on Route 7 and the Branchville commuter rail station; an area of older structures (some historic era) housing a diversity of small to medium size businesses and including the nearby Branchville Elementary School.

Danbury

• Downtown Danbury – the historic Main Street with the main library and post office as well as many multistory buildings, with retail storefronts and upper level office space.

Bethel

• Bethel Center - the historic town center with town hall, the library, historic train station, and a cluster of two-story buildings with retail storefronts.

Brookfield

• Brookfield Center - the historic town center just east of Route 7 with a cluster of small, mostly free-standing retail space.

New Milford

• Downtown New Milford - the historic town center with town hall, the library, town green, restaurants, banks, and first-floor retail stores, some of which have second-floor office space. The current train station is situated on the western edge of the downtown.

Community Resources

Community resources that typically are recognized as contributing to neighborhood cohesion include:

- Community centers
- Senior/youth centers

- Schools
- Post offices
- Cultural institutions such as libraries and museums
- Centers of town or city government

The relevant community resources for the evaluation of the rail improvement alternatives are those with facilities within or abutting the study corridor. Those in the corridor are listed below by municipality and are shown in the attached maps.

Norwalk

- South Norwalk Police Station
- Norwalk Maritime Museum
- South Norwalk Post Office

Wilton

- Wilton Public Library
- Wilton Post Office
- Wilton Community Nursery School

Redding

• West Redding Post Office

Ridgefield

• Branchville Elementary School

Bethel

- Bethel Public Library
- Bethel Post Office
- Bethel Town Hall

New Milford

- New Milford Town Hall and Community Center
- New Milford Library

Businesses

This section presents existing conditions data relative to:

- Major employers, employment, and commuting patterns
- Business climate

Major Employers, Employment and Commuting Patterns

Employment data included the following related economic indicators:

- Employment levels and commuting patterns
- Major employers by community

- Employment by sector
- Retail sales by community

Table 11 shows employment characteristics in the study corridor communities. Commuting destinations are also shown, as an indicator of potential demand for alternate modes of travel such as commuter rail. In all but Danbury and New Milford, the majority of workers commute elsewhere, with the top commuting destinations generally being south of the community of origin.

Table 11: Employment Characteristics and Commute Destinations

	Employed Persons (2006)	Percent Commuting Outside Place of Residence	Top Commute Destinations
Norwalk	46,701	62.0%	Stamford Greenwich Manhattan (NY)
Wilton	8,099	73.0%	Manhattan (NY) Stamford Norwalk
SWRPA Region	174,178	68.4%	
Redding	4,421	81.5%	Stamford Danbury Norwalk
Ridgefield	11,413	60.0%	Stamford Danbury Manhattan (NY)
Bethel	7,348	69.0%	Danbury Norwalk Stamford
Danbury	42,478	37.3%	Ridgefield Bethel Brookfield
Brookfield	8,715	67.3%	Danbury Ridgefield Bethel
New Milford	16,324	49.5%	Danbury Brookfield Ridgefield
HVCEO Region	110,894	80.7%	
Connecticut	1,765,083	81.8%	

Source: US Census 2000; CERC 2007

Table 12 shows major employers in the study corridor as defined by the number of jobs. Those located directly within the study corridor are indicated by an asterisk (*). Only those employers with 75 or more employees are listed. The largest employers in Redding, Ridgefield, Danbury, Brookfield, and New Milford are schools, local hospitals, and/or other health-related industries. Other major employers include several large manufacturing and processing plants with over 500 jobs each, including MBI in Norwalk, ASML in Wilton, and Pitney Bowes in Danbury.

Kimberly Clark Manufacturing (tissues and related products), historically the largest area employer in New Milford, dropped its workforce significantly in the last decade but remains the third largest employer in New Milford (New Milford Economic Development office, personal communication, July 31, 2008). The attached maps show the locations of the major employers located within or directly adjacent to the corridor.

Table 12: Top Five Employers with ≥75 Employees in Study Corridor Communities

C	N	Number				
Community	Name	Employed				
Norwalk	CDW - computer	650				
Noi waik	distributors	030				
	Stew Leonard	1819				
	MBI - direct mail	700				
	marketing	700				
	Pepperidge Farms	650				
	Hewitt	600				
	Association-					
	actuarial					
		1				
Bethel	Eaton Corp.*	480				
	Duracell	395				
	Inc./Gillette Co.*					
	Target	160				
	Bethel Schools	342				
	Big Y	220				
	Supermarket	220				
	Supermarket					
Redding	Redding Life Care	200				
	Redding Schools	154				
	Town of Redding	75				
	15 mm of reducing	, ,				
Brookfield	Brookfield	333				
	Schools					
	UPS	215				
	Phototronics	129				
	Research					
	Dade Behring	350				
	Costco	267				
* Employers located inside study corridor						

5 Employees in Study Corridor Communities							
Community	Name	Number Employed					
		T ====					
Wilton	ASML Lithography*	725					
	Deloitte & Touche	610					
	Claritas	430					
	L. Dreyfus Corp.	200					
	Nursing & Home Care Inc.	120					
Danbury	Danbury Schools	2,000					
	Danbury Hospital	2,915					
	Cartus - relocation services	1,600					
	Western Conn State University*	700					
	Pitney Bowes Mfgr	647					
Ridgefield	Boehringer Pharmaceutical	2800					
	Ullman Devices	180					
	Ridgefield Schools	522					
	Super Stop N Shop	140					
	Laurel Ridge Health Care Ctr	216					
New Milford	Kimberly Clark Mfgr*	426					
	New Milford Schools	600					
	New Milford Hospital	753					
	Town of New Milford	240					
	WalMart	160					

Sources: CERC 2007, HVCEO, and personal communications with employers, July and October, 2008

Table 13 indicates employment in each study corridor community by job sector and total retail sales by community. Services represent the highest percentage of any job sector in each of the study corridor communities (30 to 51 percent of jobs), with government-related employment the lowest percentage of jobs (from 1 to 8 percent). Services, as defined in the 1987 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) manual include legal services, accounting services, and schools, as

^{*} Employers located inside study corridor

well as restaurants and repair and maintenance services. The services category does not include those directly in government service, such as municipal employees.

 Table 13: Employment by Sector

	Agriculture	Constr. & Mining	Manuf.	Transpor. Utilities	Trade	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Services	Government	2002 Retail Sales
Norwalk	1.2%	5.1%	19.7%	4.9%	19.7%	7.3%	40.1%	2.0%	\$2,017,911,476
Wilton	2.8%	3.3%	10.4%	7.0%	12.9%	9.3%	51.2%	3.0%	\$992,017,769
Redding	6.5%	17.2%	4.5%	4.2%	15.5%	6.3%	40.5%	5.4%	\$28,039,366
Ridgefield	2.6%	6.1%	7.7%	2.5%	24.4%	6.6%	48.0%	2.2%	\$318,932,146
Bethel	2.3%	9.5%	25.1%	8.9%	19.0%	3.7%	30.3%	1.1%	\$225,547,355
Danbury	0.7%	6.1%	19.9%	3.7%	27.0%	4.3%	35.5%	2.8%	\$5,259,828,199
Brookfield	0.8%	7.5%	11.8%	5.9%	36.4%	4.0%	30.4%	3.1%	\$774,037,534
New Milford	1.5%	8.1%	17.9%	2.7%	21.8%	4.8%	41.8%	1.4%	\$338,325,205
Connecticut	1.1%	5.0%	13.4%	5.2%	20.6%	7.8%	38.5%	8.3%	n/a

Source: CERC 2007

Business Climate

The local business climate within the study corridor is reflected by the following data:

- Non-residential grand list value
- Major commercial centers
- Planned and programmed new non-residential development.

The non-residential grand list data, which reflects the value of taxable business properties and the larger planned or programmed development sites anticipated within the study corridor, are itemized below. The aattched maps include the locations of major commercial centers and planned development sites that fall within the study corridor. A major commercial center is defined in two ways for this analysis. There are regional business clusters such as those found in a regional shopping mall or regional industrial or office park with businesses who serve a broad market extending beyond local jurisdictions. Second, there are local commercial clusters with a concentration of businesses whose market area is primarily the community at large. These commercial centers or clusters with mostly a local market area often encompass or constitute a community 'downtown.'

In general, the commercial and industrial properties in the study corridor communities represent less than 25 percent of the taxable property value in each community. Among the study corridor communities, the two urban centers of Norwalk and Danbury have the highest percentage of their grand list values in non-residential properties, at 18.6 percent and 24.7 percent respectively. Redding and Ridgefield have the lowest percentage of their grand list value in non-residential properties among study corridor communities (5.2 and 8.8 percent respectively).

Norwalk: The commercial and industrial grand list value in Norwalk is 18.6 percent of the total grand list. There is one notable project underway in the study corridor in Norwalk: in the South Norwalk neighborhood the South Norwalk Rail Station will be enhanced as an intermodal center. Plans for the intermodal center include additional parking, new transit access including bus and shuttle bays, and enhanced access and circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. The South Norwalk train station is strategically located adjacent to the South Main Street and Washington Street entertainment districts, thus making it a destination point for many commuters traveling to Norwalk from other locations. The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency is at work on a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plan for the neighborhood.

Wilton: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 12 percent of the total in Wilton. There are no notable planned or programmed projects in the study corridor in Wilton.

Redding: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 5.2 percent of the total in Redding. There is one notable redevelopment project underway in the Georgetown section of Redding: the former Gilbert and Bennett Wire factory site is being redeveloped as a mixed-use, Transit-Oriented Development. An important feature of this redevelopment is a proposed new rail station on the Danbury Branch Line (being studied separately from this project).

Ridgefield: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 8.8 percent of Ridgefield's total. There are no notable planned or programmed projects in the study corridor in Ridgefield.

Bethel: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 13.5 percent of the total in Bethel. There are no notable planned or programmed projects in the study corridor in Bethel.

Danbury: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 24.7 percent of the total in Danbury. While there is substantial commercial as well as residential development underway in Danbury, there are no notable planned or programmed projects in the study corridor there.

Brookfield: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 15 percent of the total in Brookfield. While the Route 7 corridor west of the rail study corridor in Brookfield is undergoing substantial commercial and residential development, there are no notable planned or programmed projects in the rail study corridor itself in Brookfield.

New Milford: The commercial and industrial grand list value is 10.9 percent of the total in New Milford. There is one notable redevelopment site in New Milford within the study corridor: the former Century Brass industrial site, adjacent to the rail tracks, which has been designated an Enterprise Zone. The Connecticut Enterprise Zone Program is administered by the DECD and affords businesses a variety of incentives for expansion, retention and recruitment in the zone. The Town is actively working on redevelopment options for the site.

Municipal Services and Finances

Data on the study corridor communities' municipal services and finances include the following:

Range of municipal and emergency services provided

- School bus routes
- Municipal finances

Municipal Services and Emergency Services

All of the study corridor communities provide the traditional municipal services including government, schools, roadway system maintenance, libraries, and some sewer service. However, municipal water and sewer service are not universally available in all communities. Water and sewer service are community-wide in Norwalk and Danbury. In Wilton, Redding, Ridgefield, Bethel and New Milford, water and sewer are located only through the cores of each community with some extension areas. Brookfield provides only a limited sewer service area and no water service. Water lines from Danbury extend north into Brookfield to serve new development along Route 7 and this is the only area with public water service in Brookfield. In each community there are some sewer lines and/or water lines that cross into or through the study corridor.

Each study corridor community has a number of emergency services and government facilities. Those which may be pertinent to the evaluation of the rail improvement alternatives are those with related infrastructure that fall within or adjacent to the study corridor itself. These are listed below by municipality and shown on the attached maps.

Norwalk

South Norwalk Police Station

Wilton

Wilton Public Library

Bethel

- Bethel Town Hall
- Bethel Library

Danbury

- Beaver Brook Fire Company
- Mill Plain Fire Company

Brookfield

- Brookfield Volunteer Fire Company
- Brookfield Police Department
- Brookfield Town Hall

New Milford

- Gaylordsville Volunteer Fire District
- New Milford Community Ambulance Corps
- Proposed new Ambulance Corps site
- New Milford Town Hall
- New Milford Library
- New Milford Water Pollution Control Facility
- New Milford Garbage Station (transfer station)

School Bus Routes

There are a number of school bus storage/parking lots (depots) located within the study corridor, serving the corridor communities. These are shown on the attached maps. The school bus routes are not mapped by the school transportation providers, but discussions with school bus service providers yielded some information about which streets are used and whether they cross the rail line. All of the communities have some school bus routes that cross the tracks. More detailed information was available for four of the corridor communities, as described below.

Wilton: There are a total of four (4) at-grade crossings in Wilton, and one (1) at-grade crossing in Ridgefield used by buses serving Wilton schools. The morning bus times range from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. There is one (1) mid-day run from 12:45 to 1:30 p.m. Afternoon bus times range from 2:20 to 4:30 p.m.

- Kent Road crossed only in emergency detour situations. No buses routed on a daily basis.
- Cannon Road Three (3) bus routes cross here two (2) times daily, a.m. and p.m. Other buses utilize Cannon Road as a detour or shortcut. This road is also frequently used as a detour for Route 7 traffic when a motor vehicle accident shuts down the highway.
- Seeley Road There are up to four (4) buses routed through this crossing, a.m. and p.m. This road is also frequently used as a detour for Route 7 traffic when a motor vehicle accident shuts down the highway.
- Honey Hill Road One (1) bus is routed through this crossing two (2) times daily, a.m. and p.m.
- Portland Avenue (Branchville Railroad Station) Four (4) buses are routed through this crossing, a.m. and p.m.

Redding: Locations of bus crossings in the study corridor are noted below.

- Sidecut Road Crossing: Five bus routes cross the tracks, a.m. and p.m.
- Simpaug Turnpike Crossing: Two routes cross here, a.m. and p.m.

Bethel: All bus routes serving Bethel schools travel over the South Street and Greenwood Avenue railroad crossings multiple times a day. The bus depot (terminal) is located on one side of the tracks and all of the schools are located on the other.

Danbury: Danbury has 424 bus routes, including morning, afternoon, and alternative program routes. About 70 percent of buses cross the Triangle Street or North Main Street railroad crossings. The bus depot/garage is located adjacent to the Triangle Street crossing; therefore, buses make several trips (usually without school children on board) over this crossing each day. Most routes that use the crossings are intercity routes.

Municipal Finances

Data on municipal finances are shown in Table 14. The net grand list is the sum of the assessed values of all taxable properties within the municipality. The mil rate is the amount of tax per

thousand dollars of assessed property; this rate is determined by each municipality based on their annual budget. Taxes per property are determined by the mil rate times the assessed property value. Although property taxes are paid on a per-property rather than a per-capita basis, the table shows the taxes each person would pay (per capita tax) if taxes were distributed evenly among all residents. The smaller communities (by population) of Wilton, Redding, and Ridgefield have the highest per capita tax among the study corridor communities, while Danbury and New Milford have the lowest.

Table 14: Municipal Finances 2007

	2007	2006	2006	2004 Net
	Population	Per Capita Tax	Mil Rate	Grand List
Norwalk	84,692	\$2,441	25.1	\$8,362,378,746
Wilton	18,144	\$4,624	22.6	\$3,699,528,200
Redding	8,590	\$3,825	22.7	\$1,362,203,370
Ridgefield	24,073	\$3,962	23.4	\$4,104,271,819
Bethel	18,307	\$2,329	26.5	\$1,595,344,170
Danbury	78,765	\$1,622	23.0	\$5,635,804,295
Brookfield	16,210	\$2,711	23.9	\$1,784,540,427
New Milford	28,950	\$2,042	27.1	\$2,201,872,070

Source: CERC 2007 and Municipal Annual Reports

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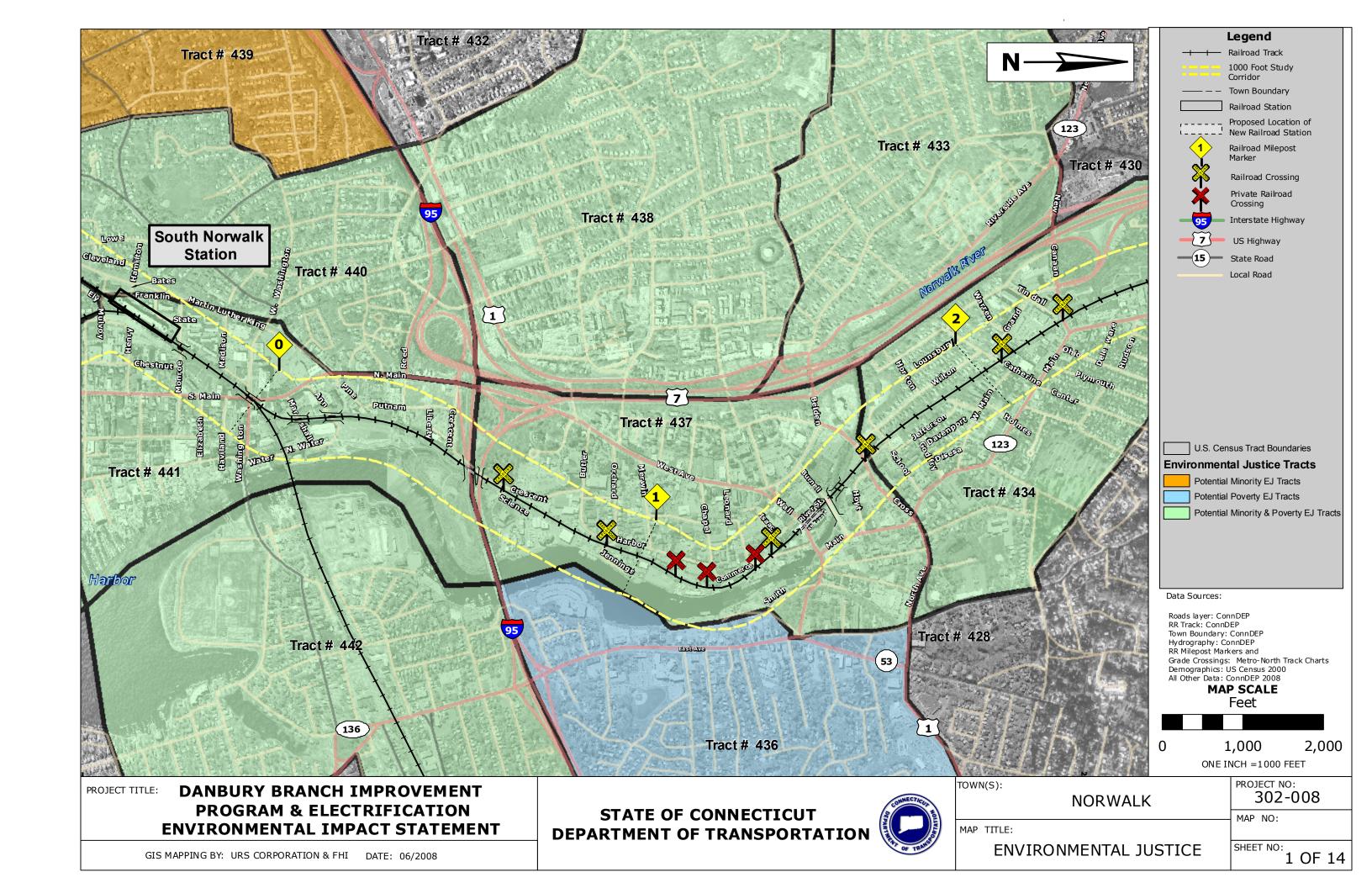
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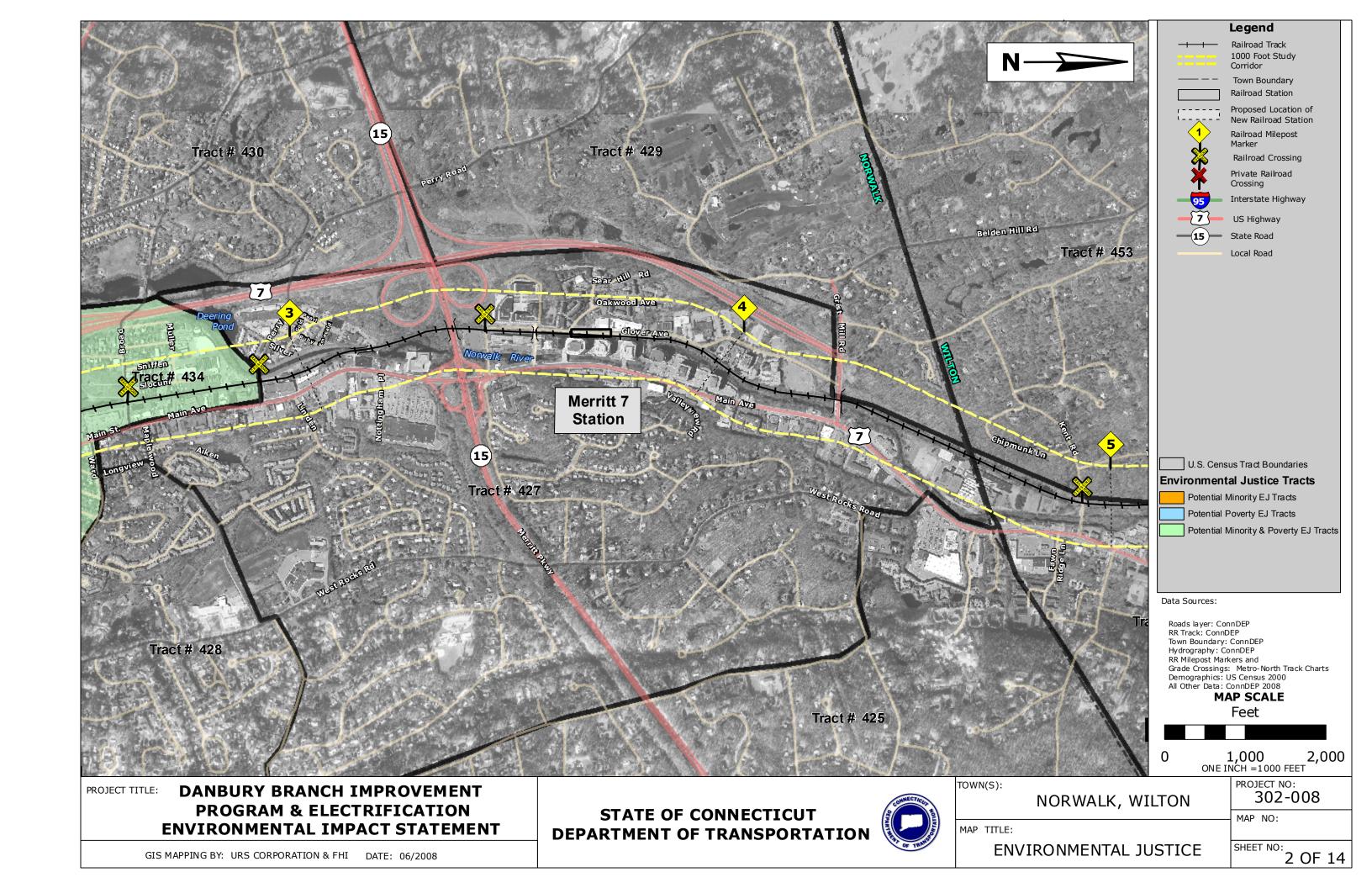
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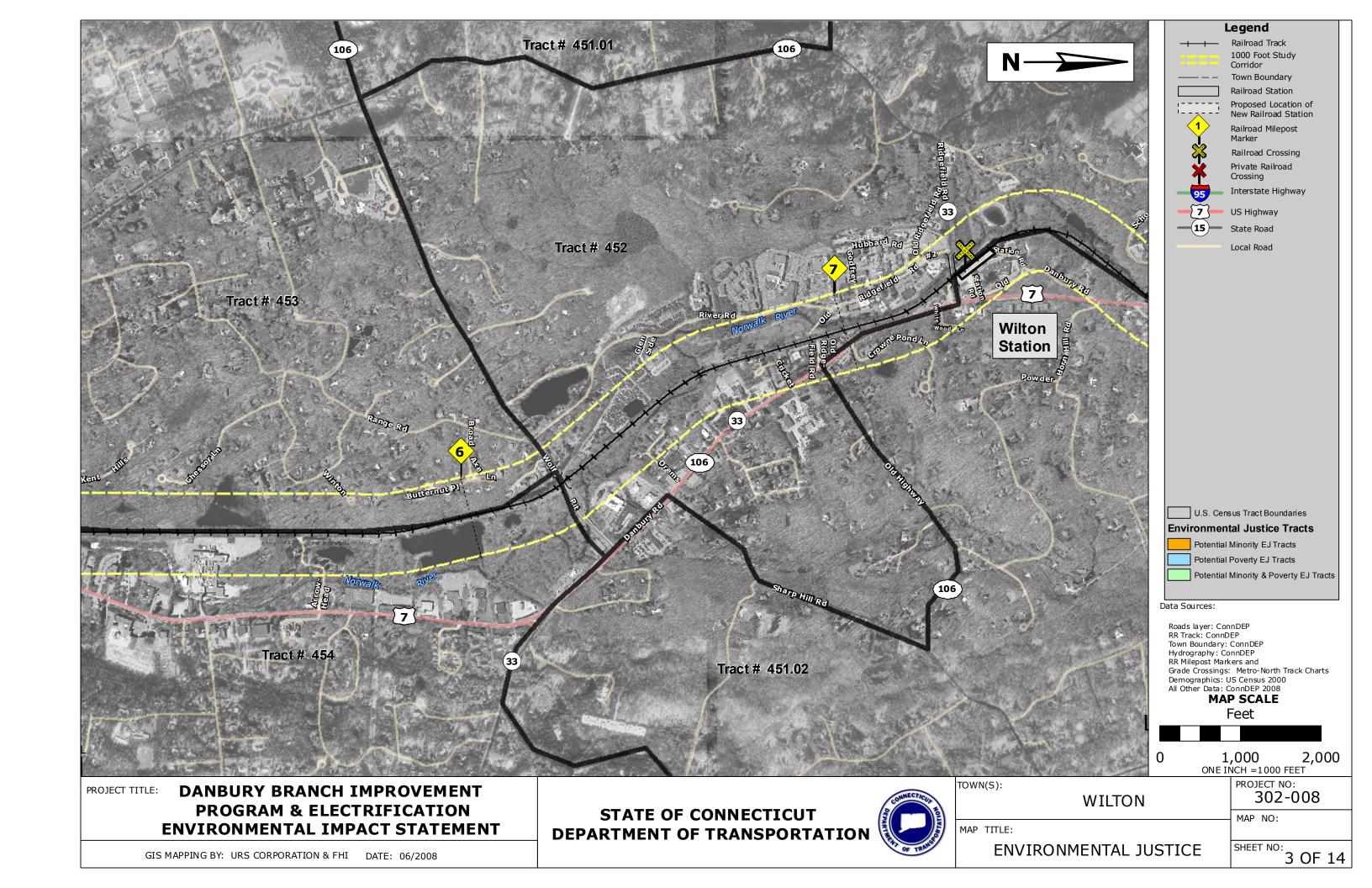
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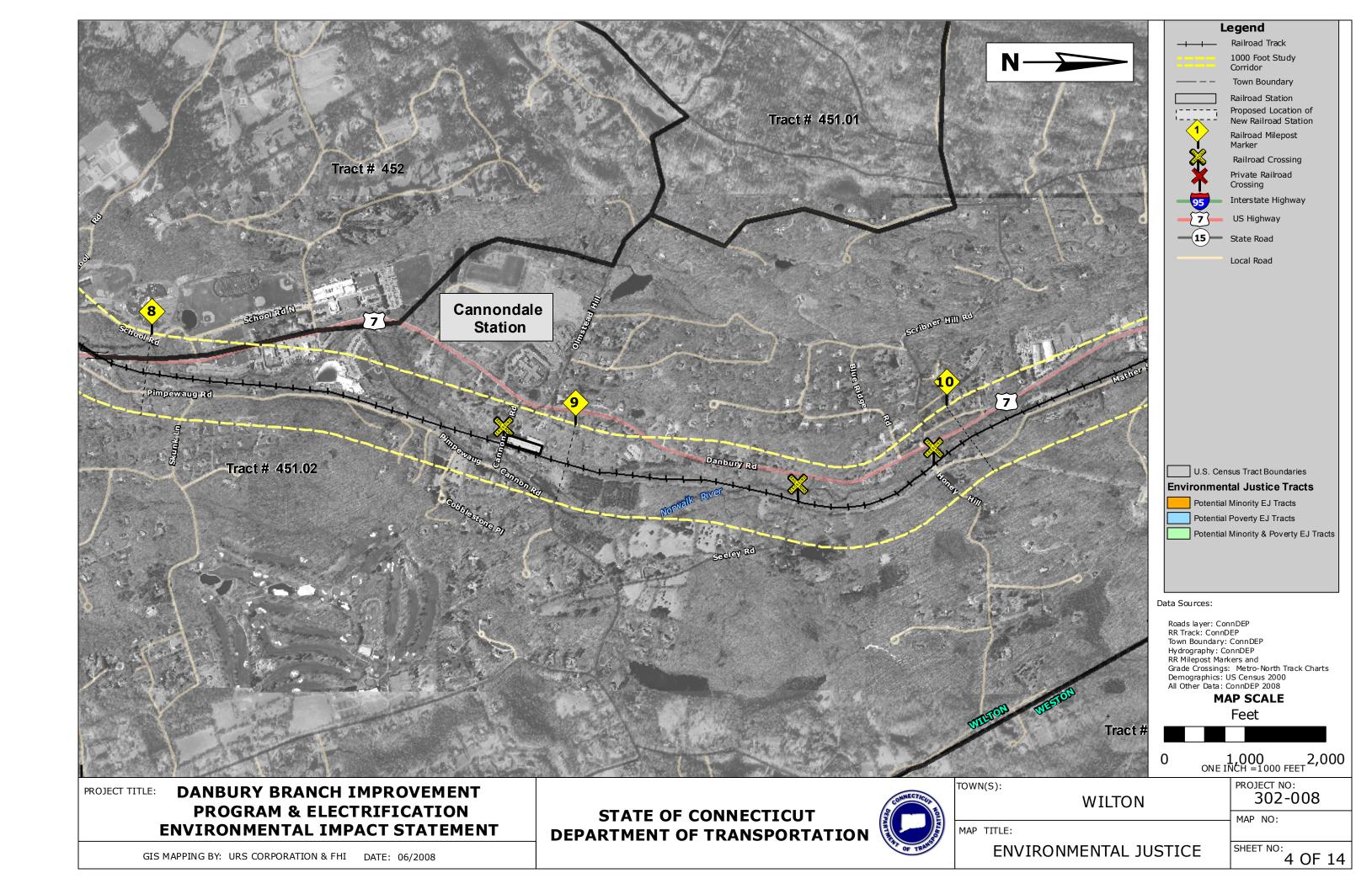
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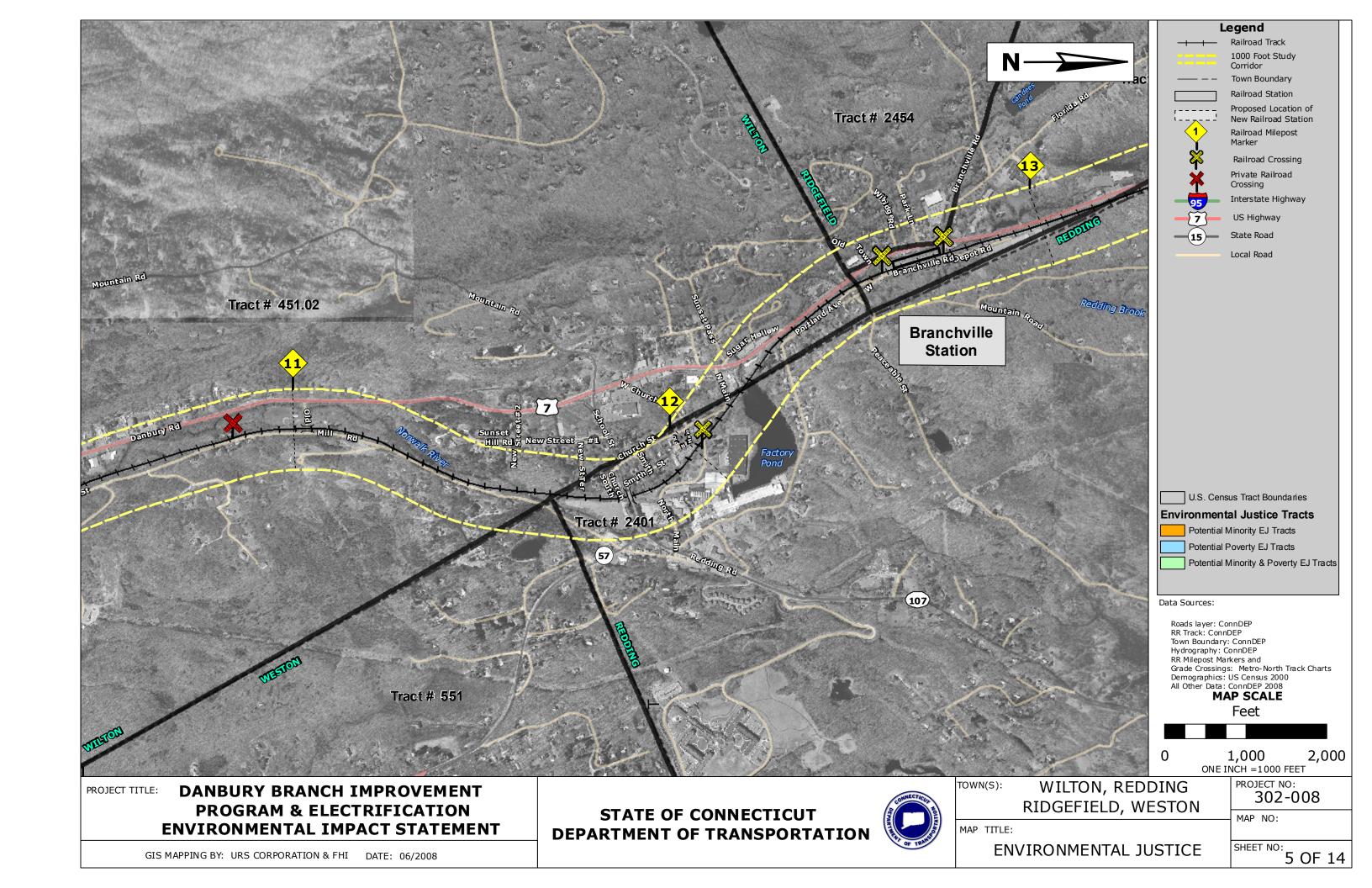
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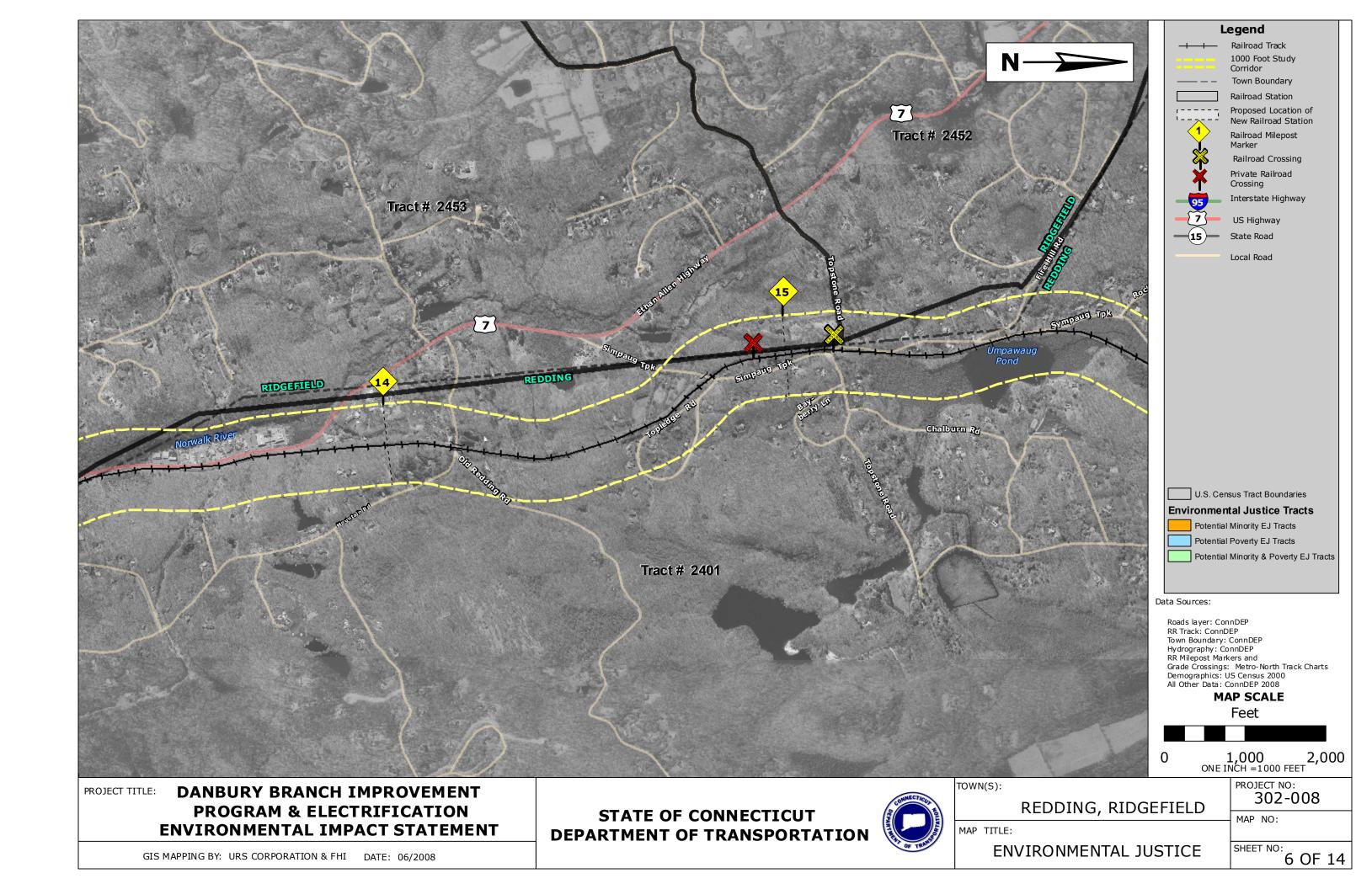


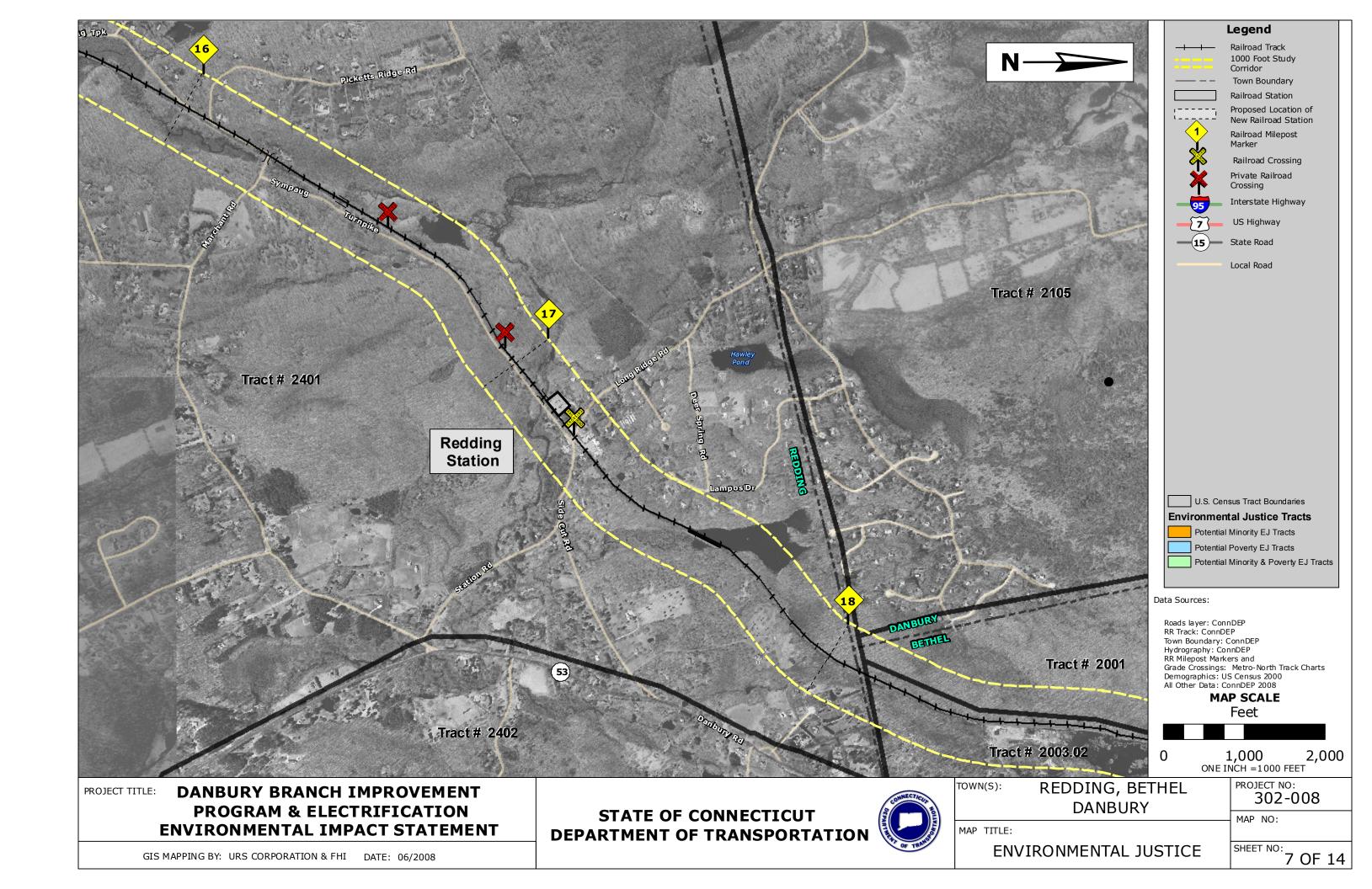


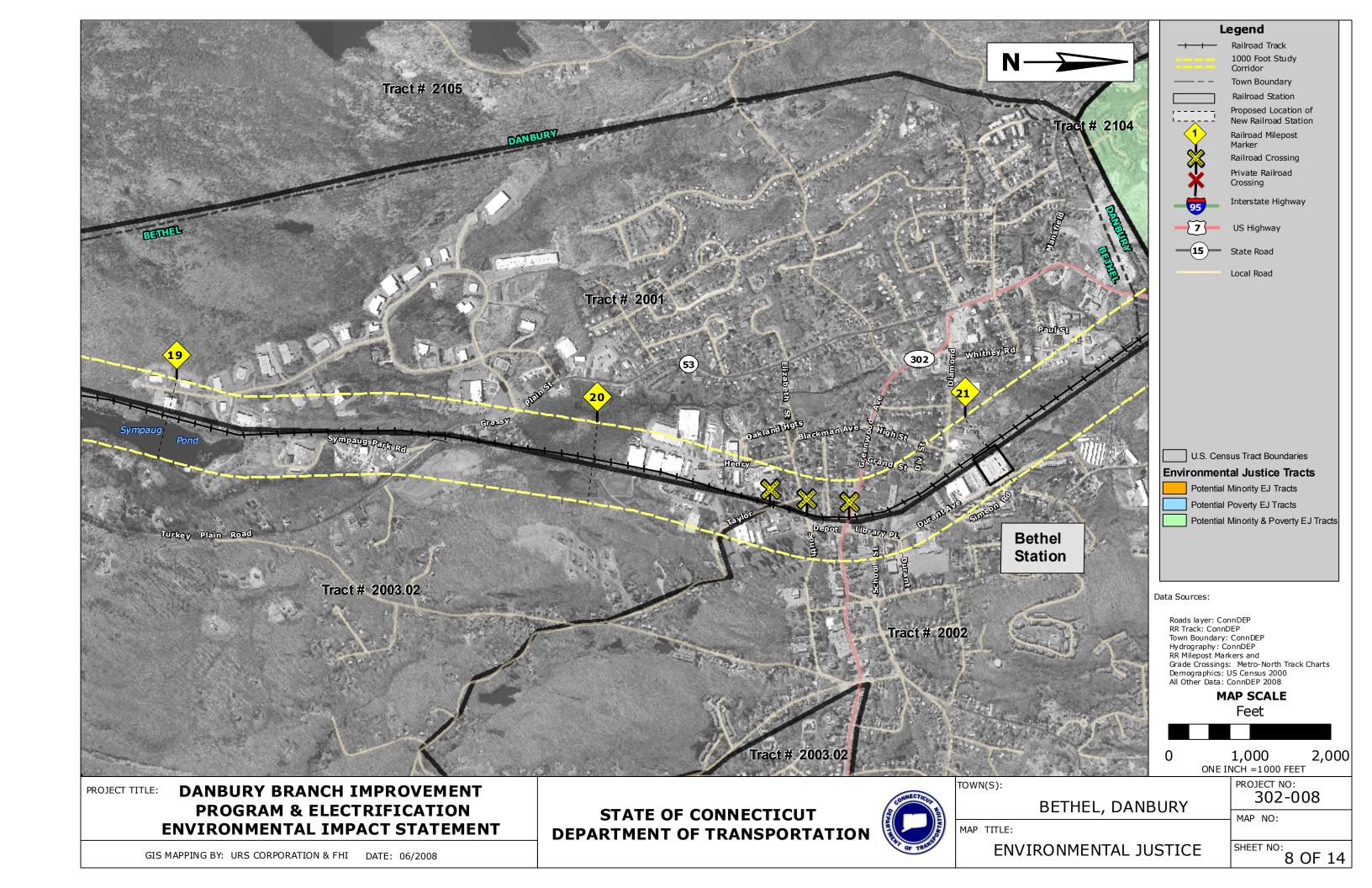


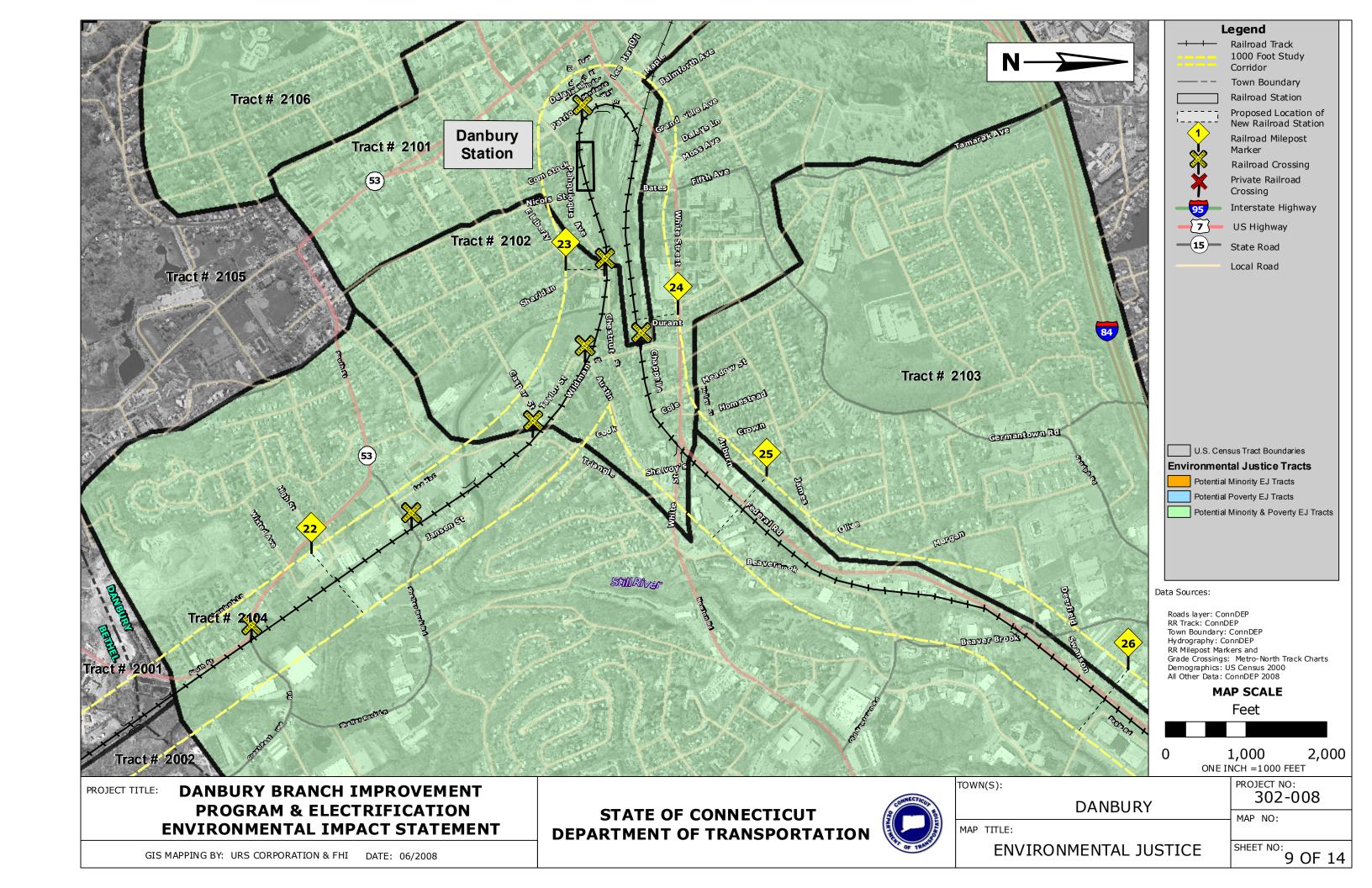


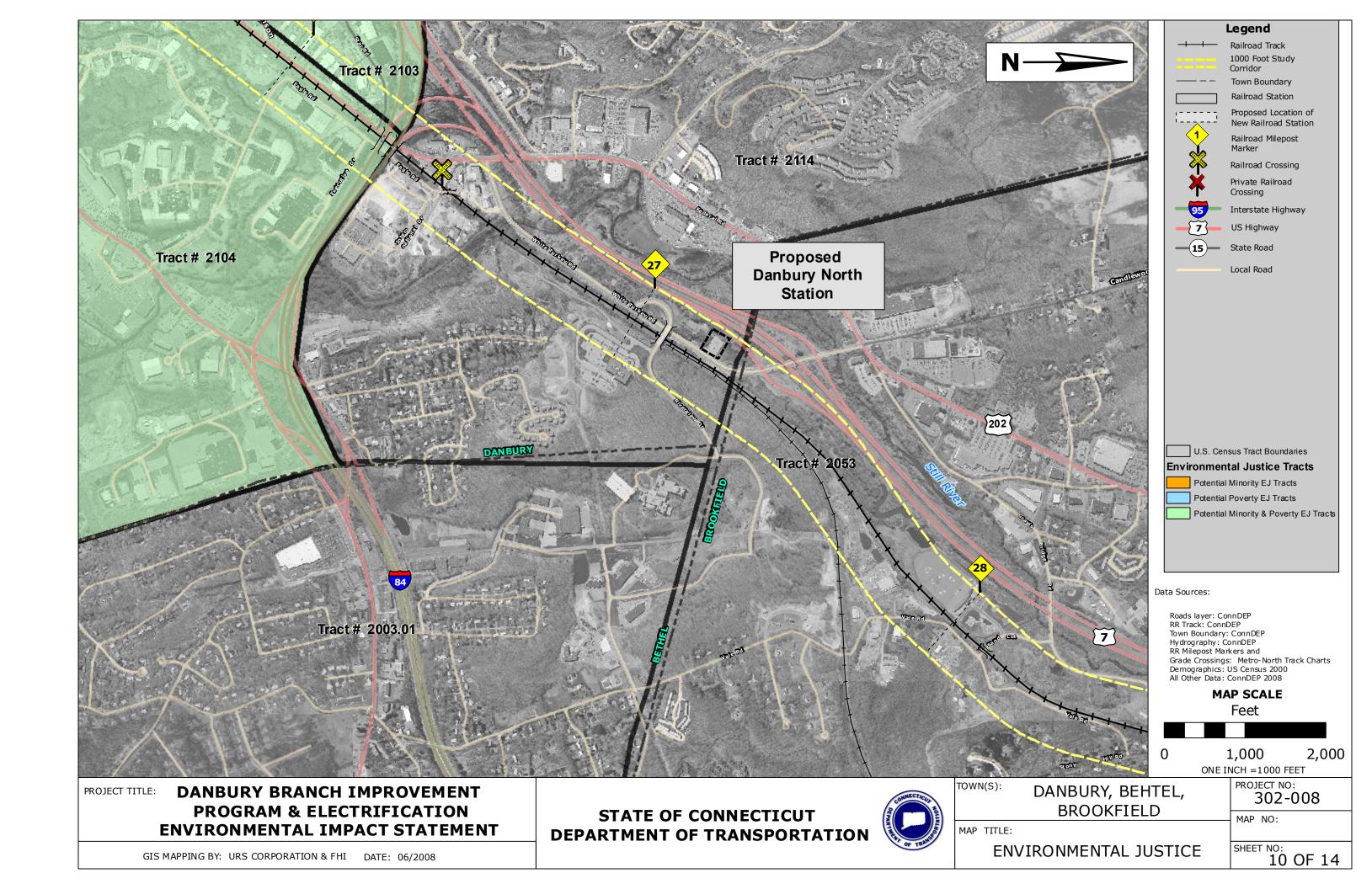


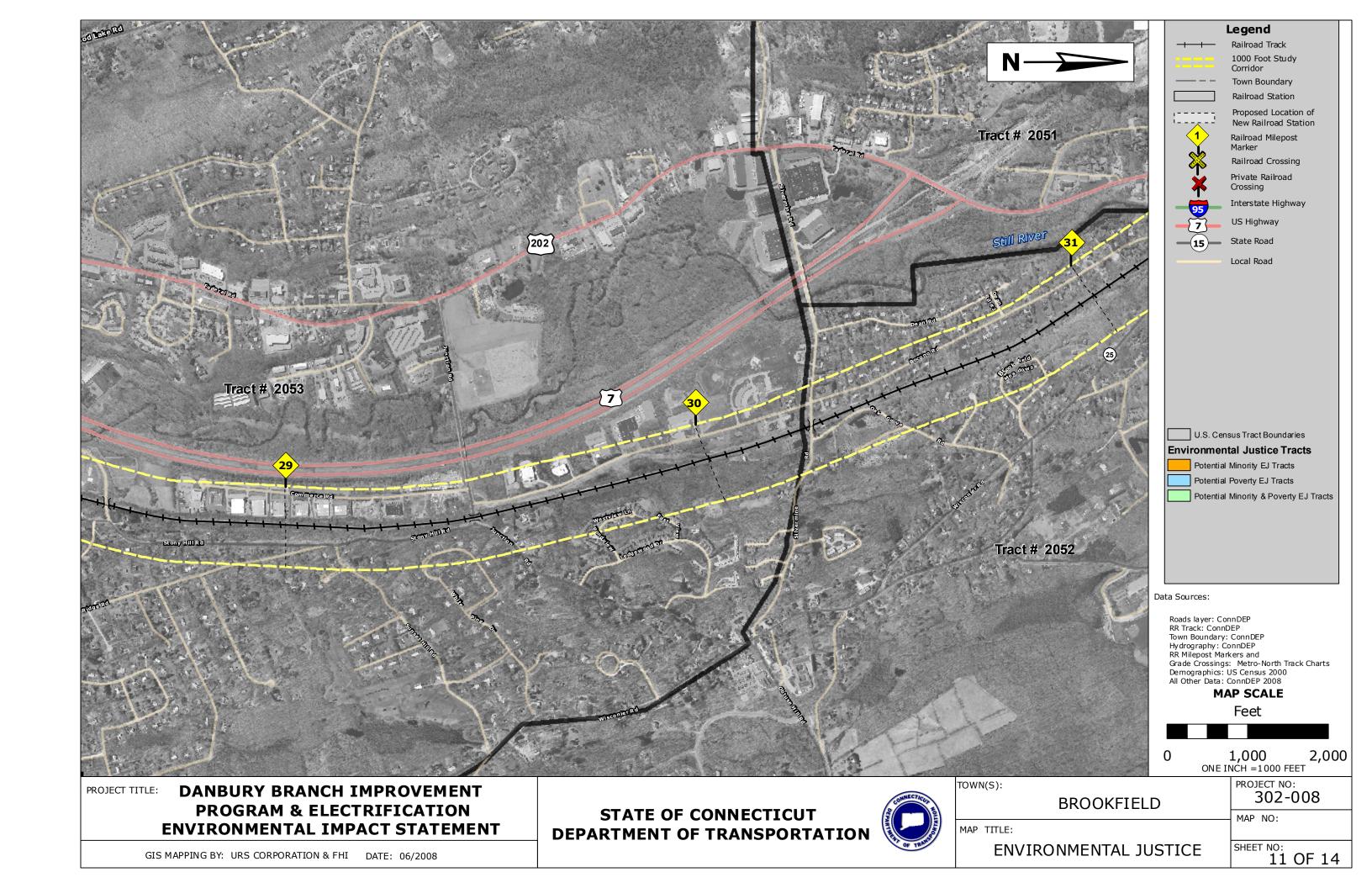


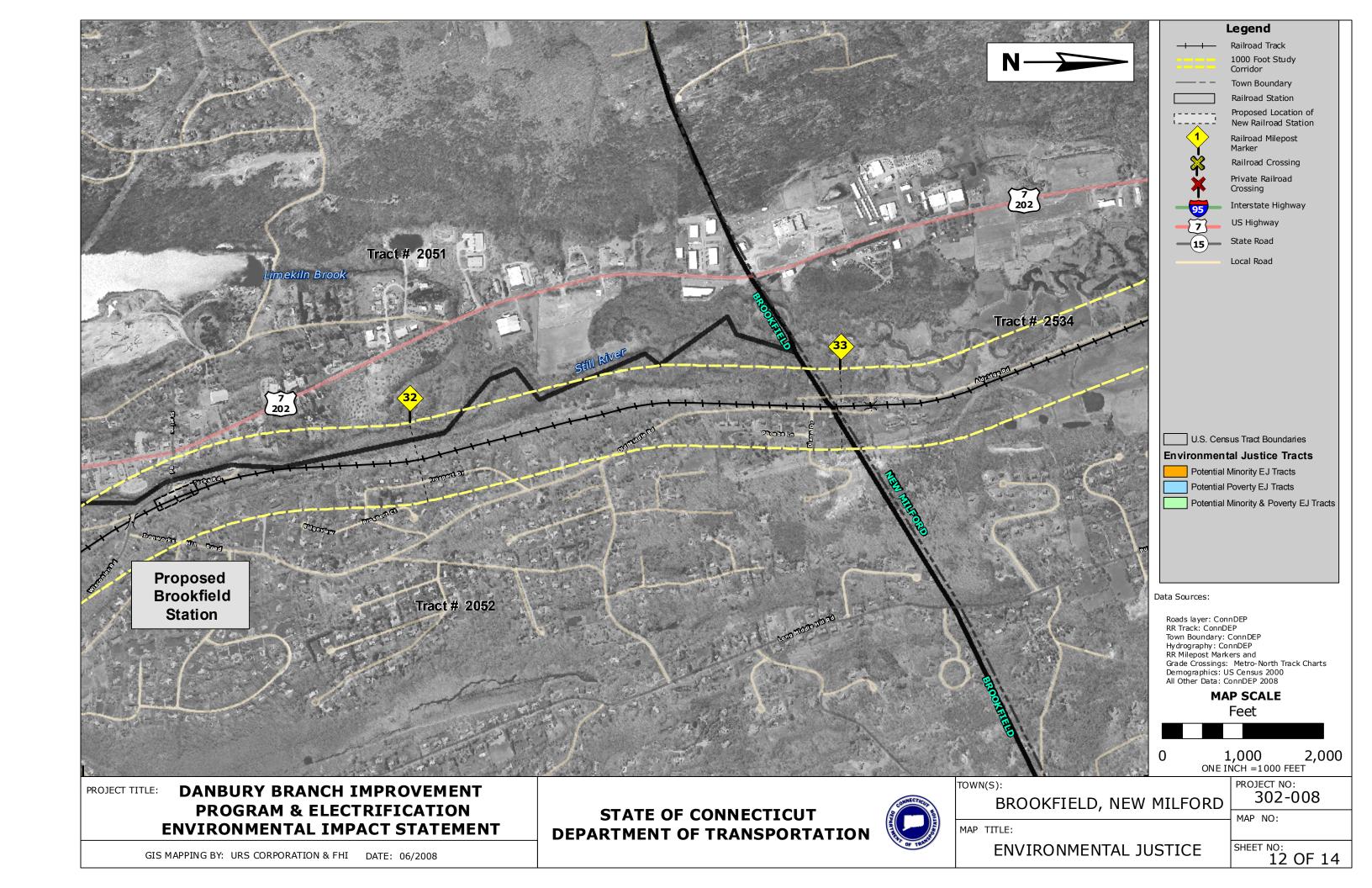


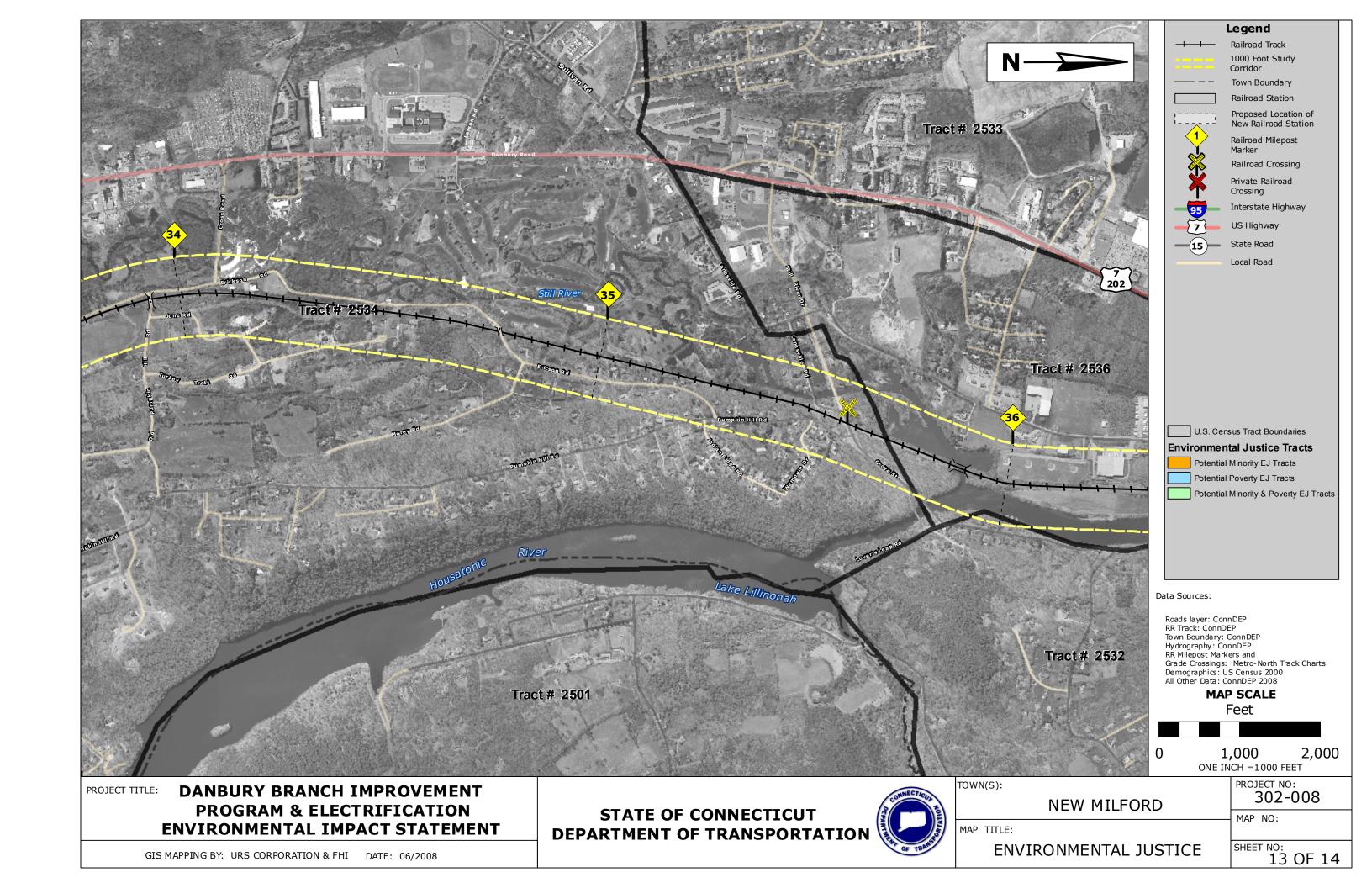


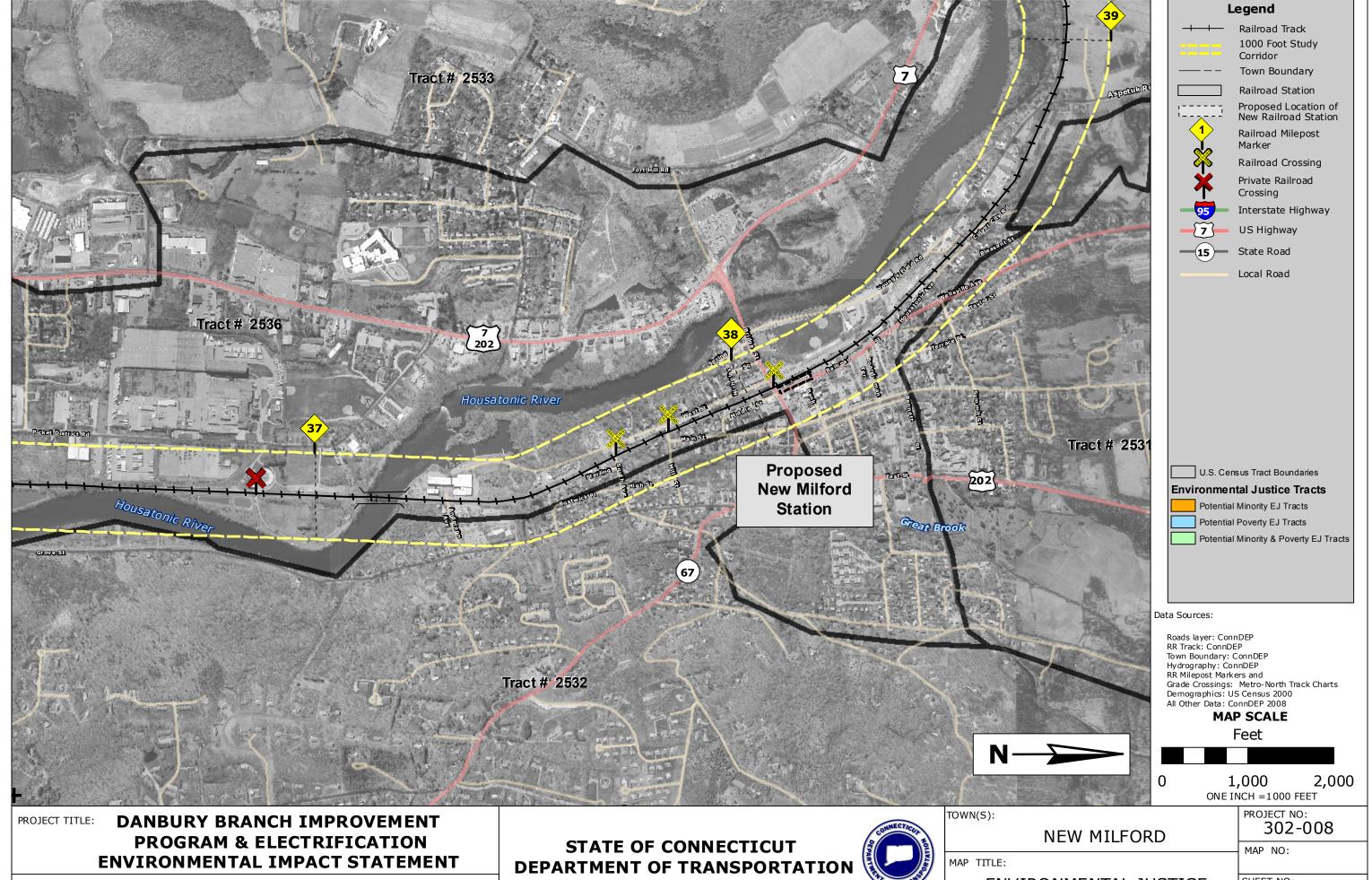






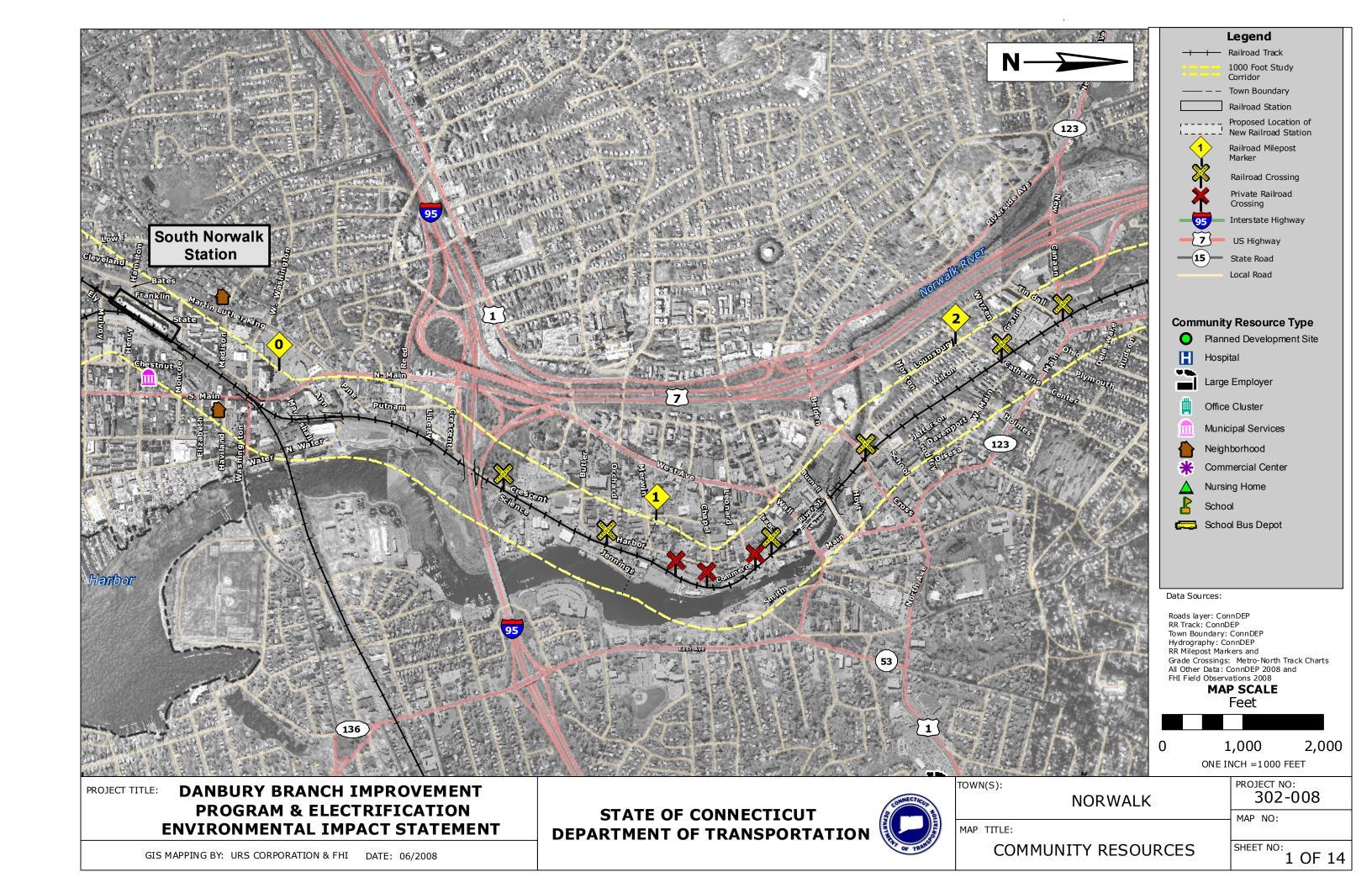


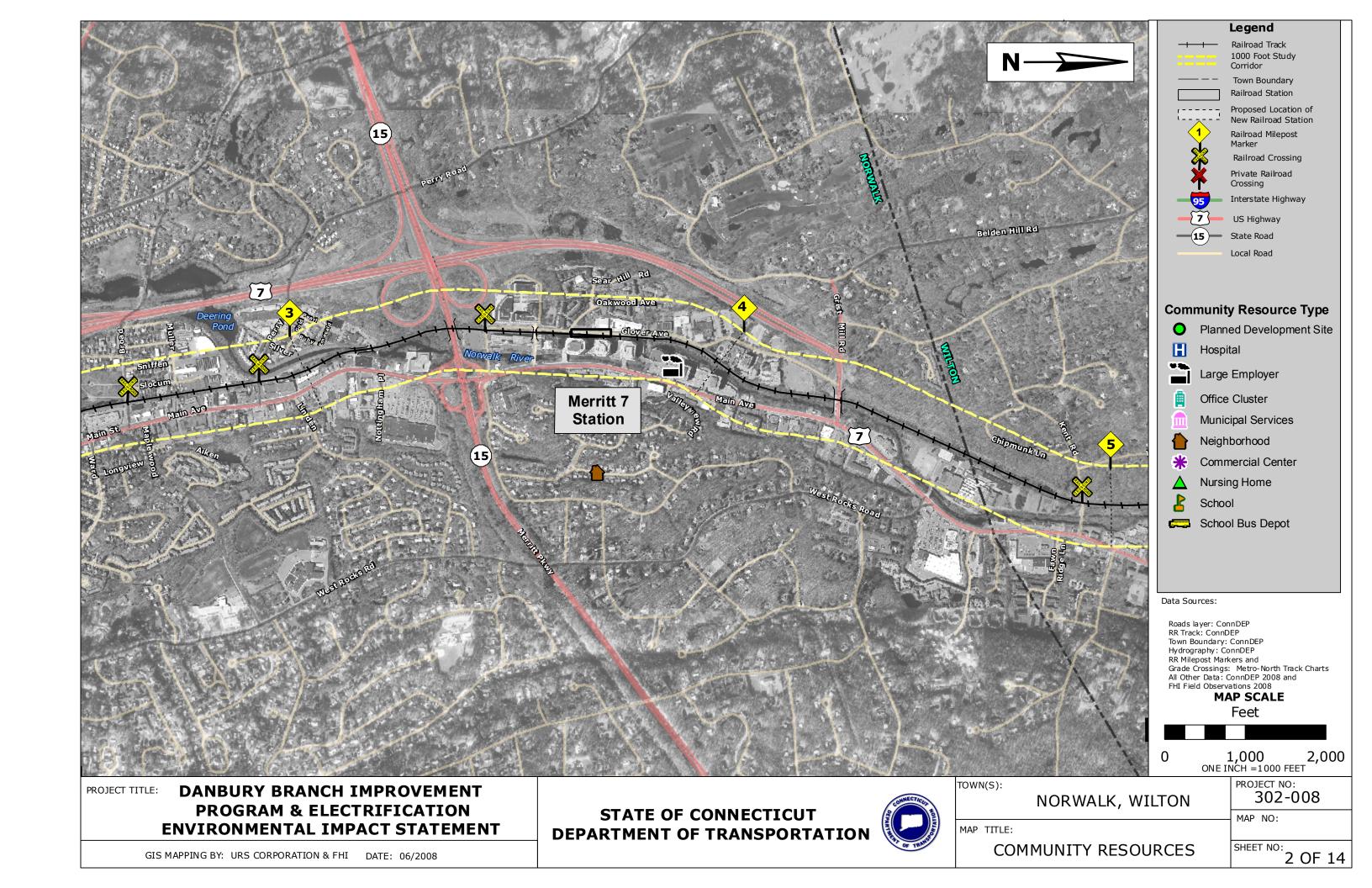


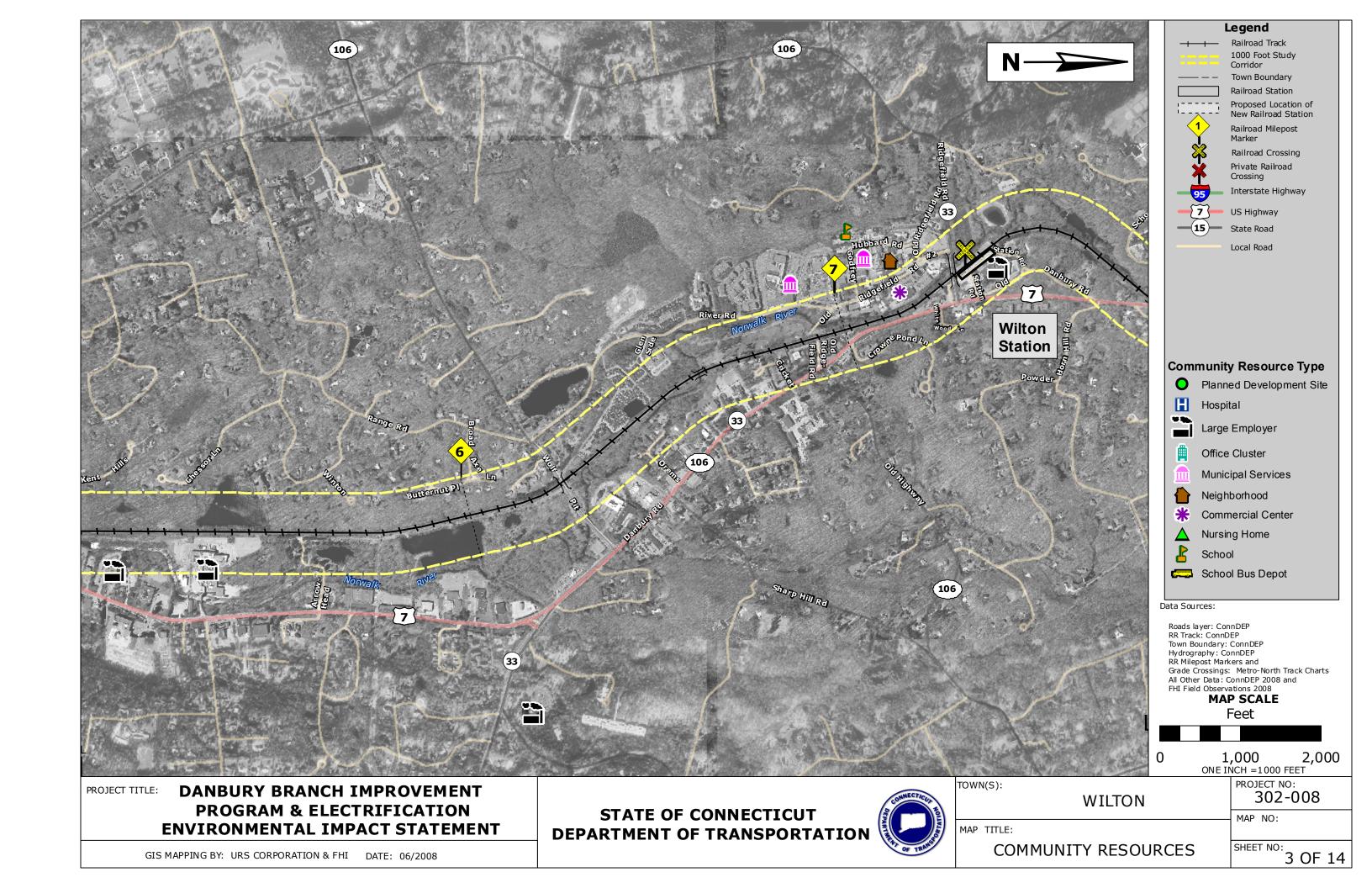


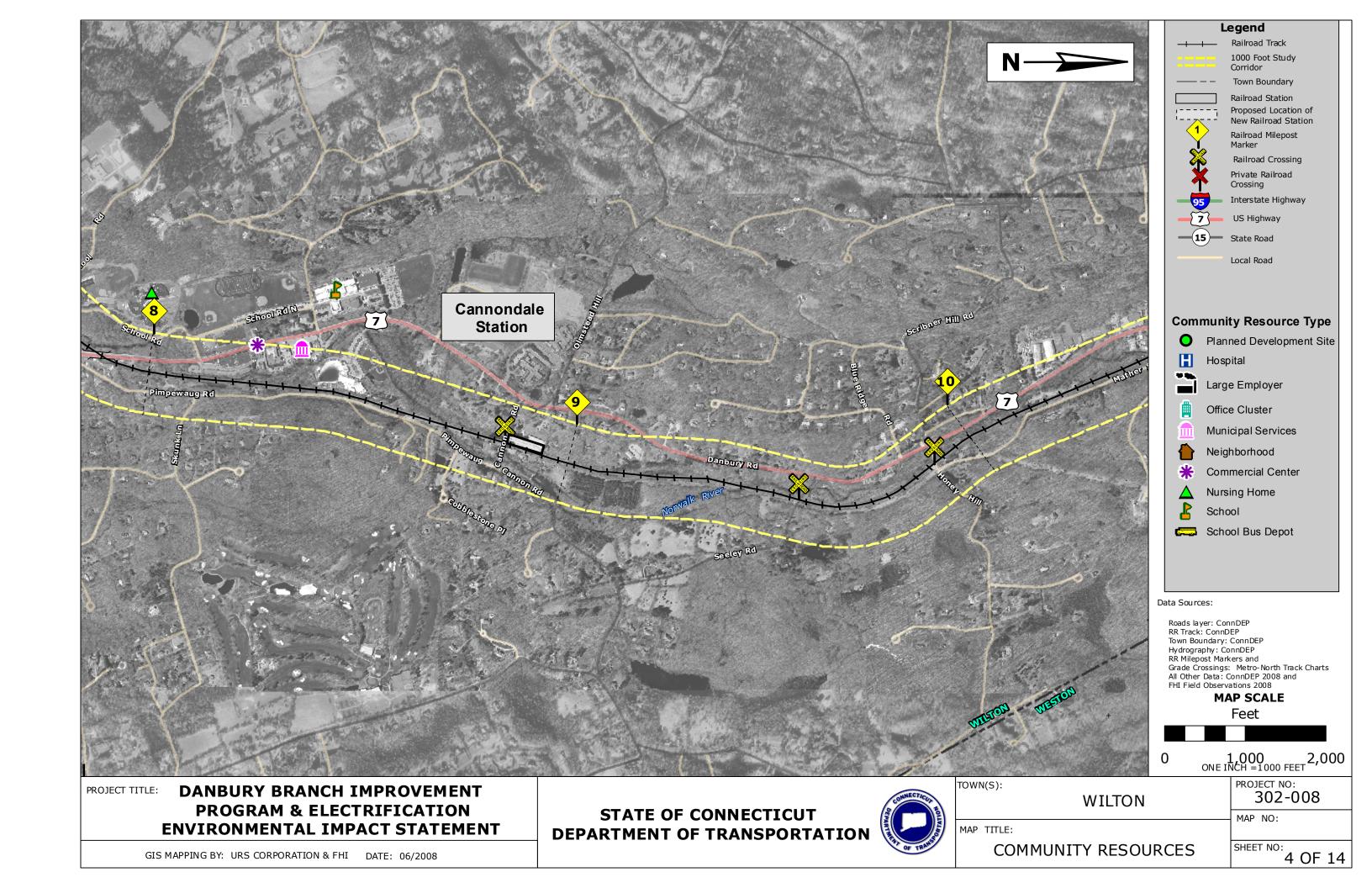
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

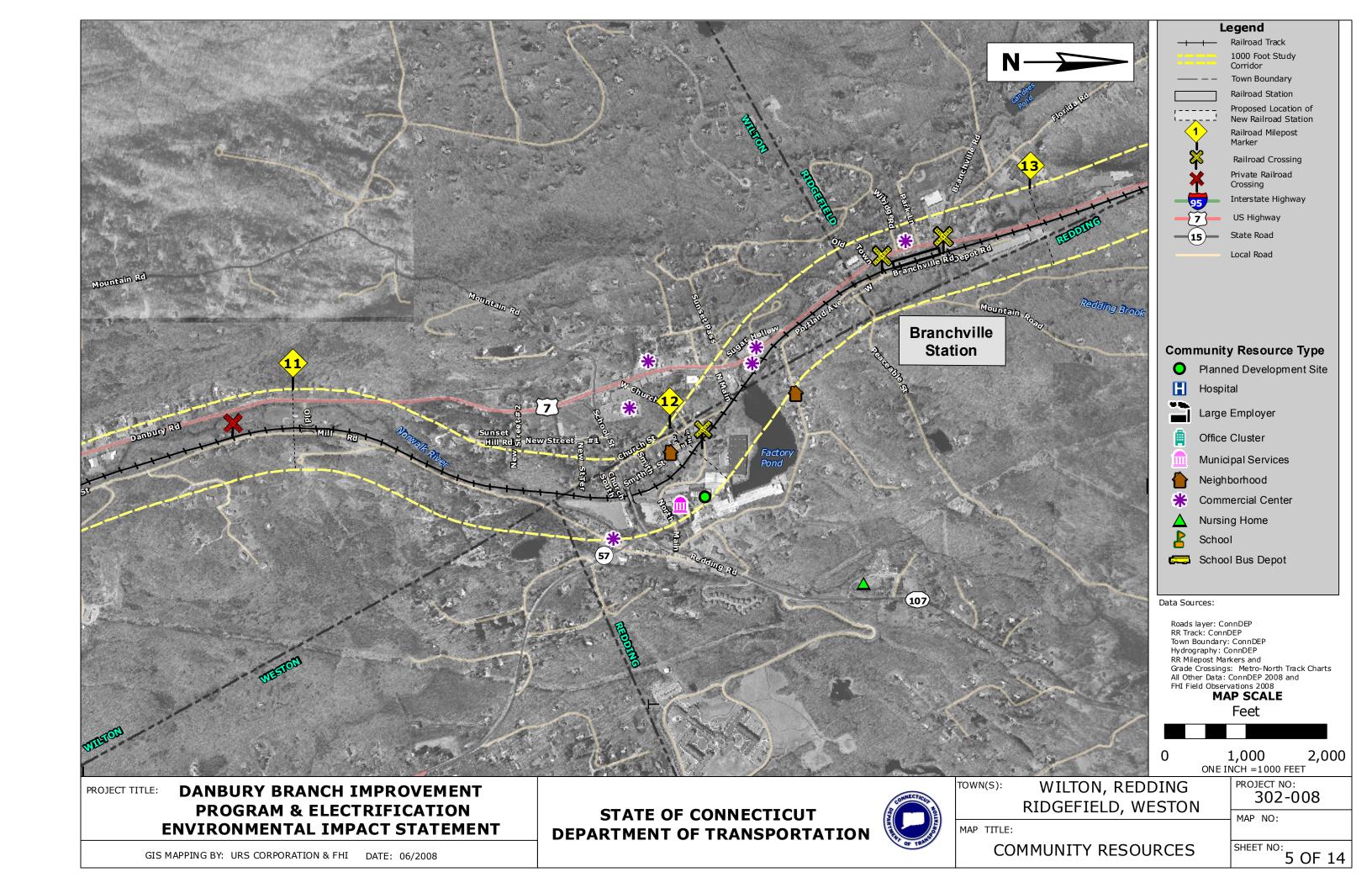
SHEET NO: 14 OF 14

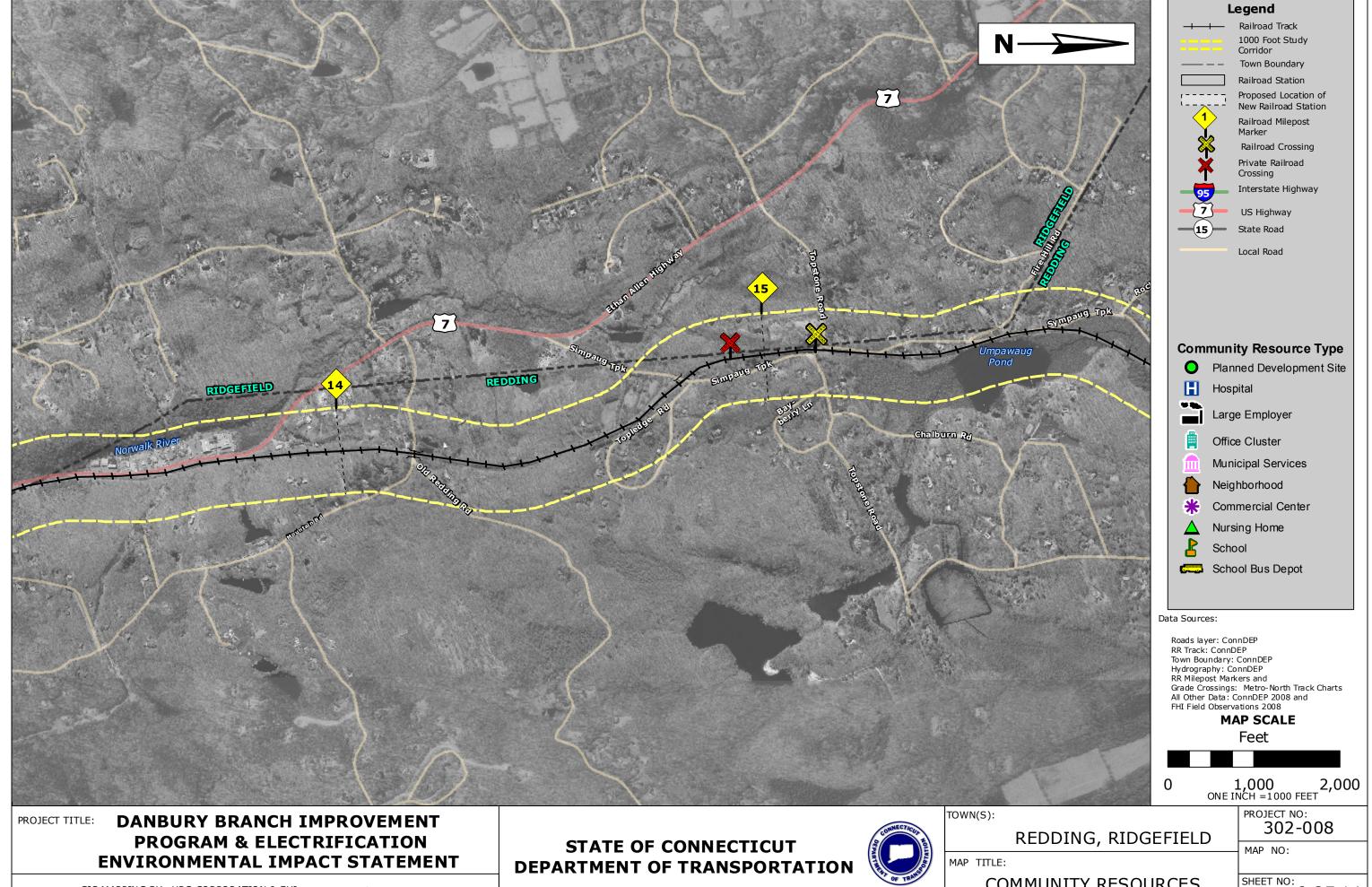






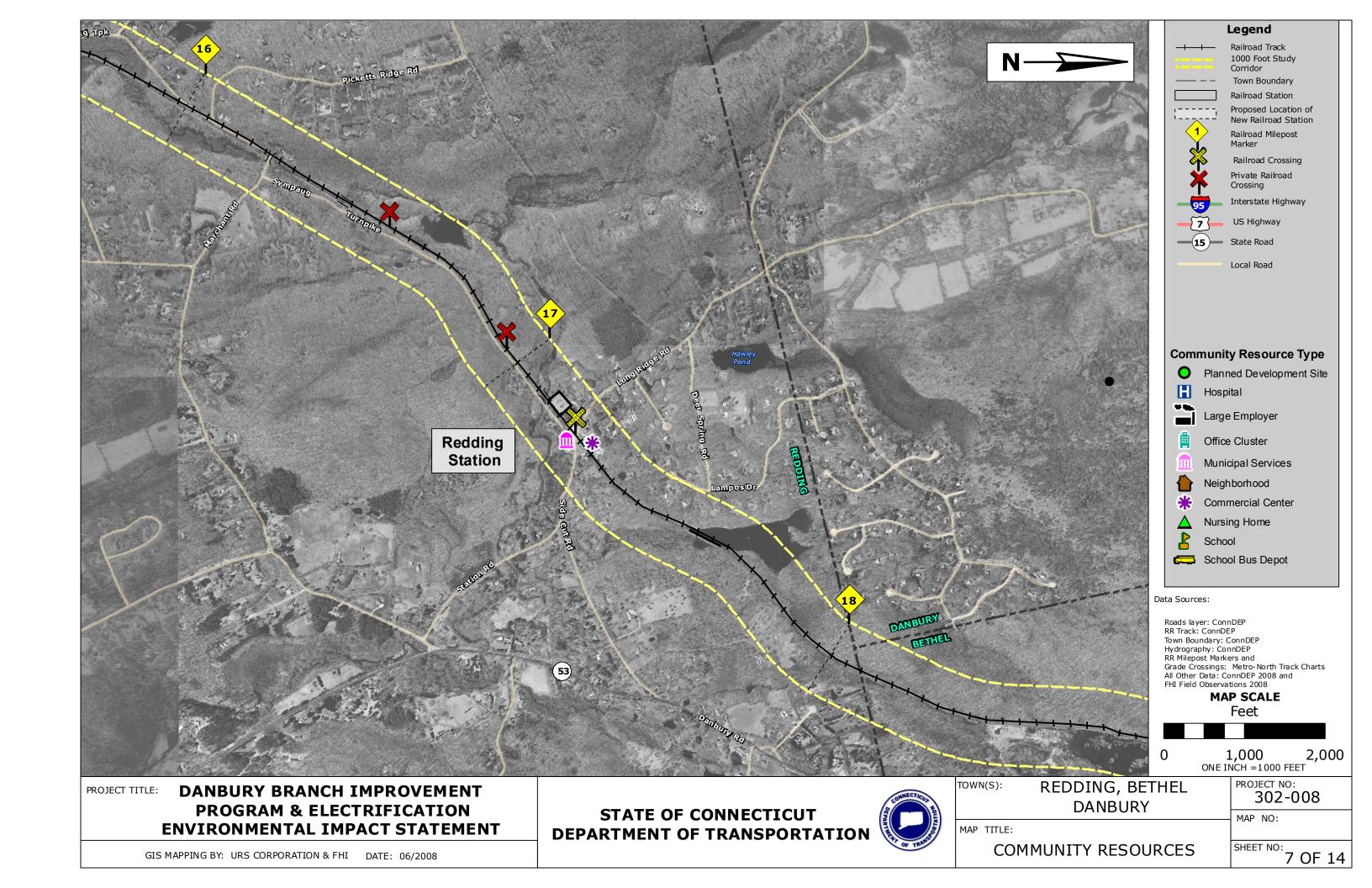


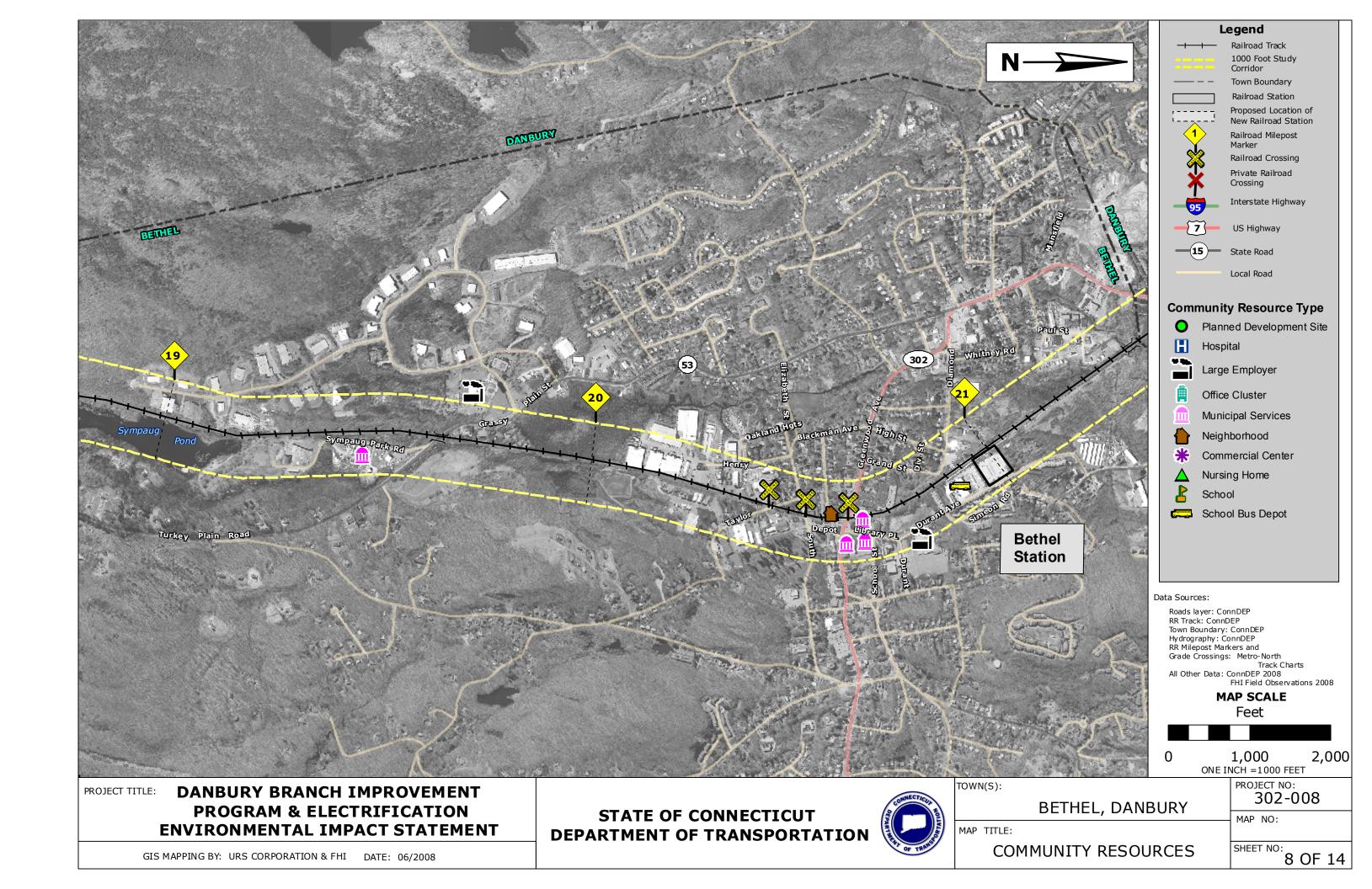


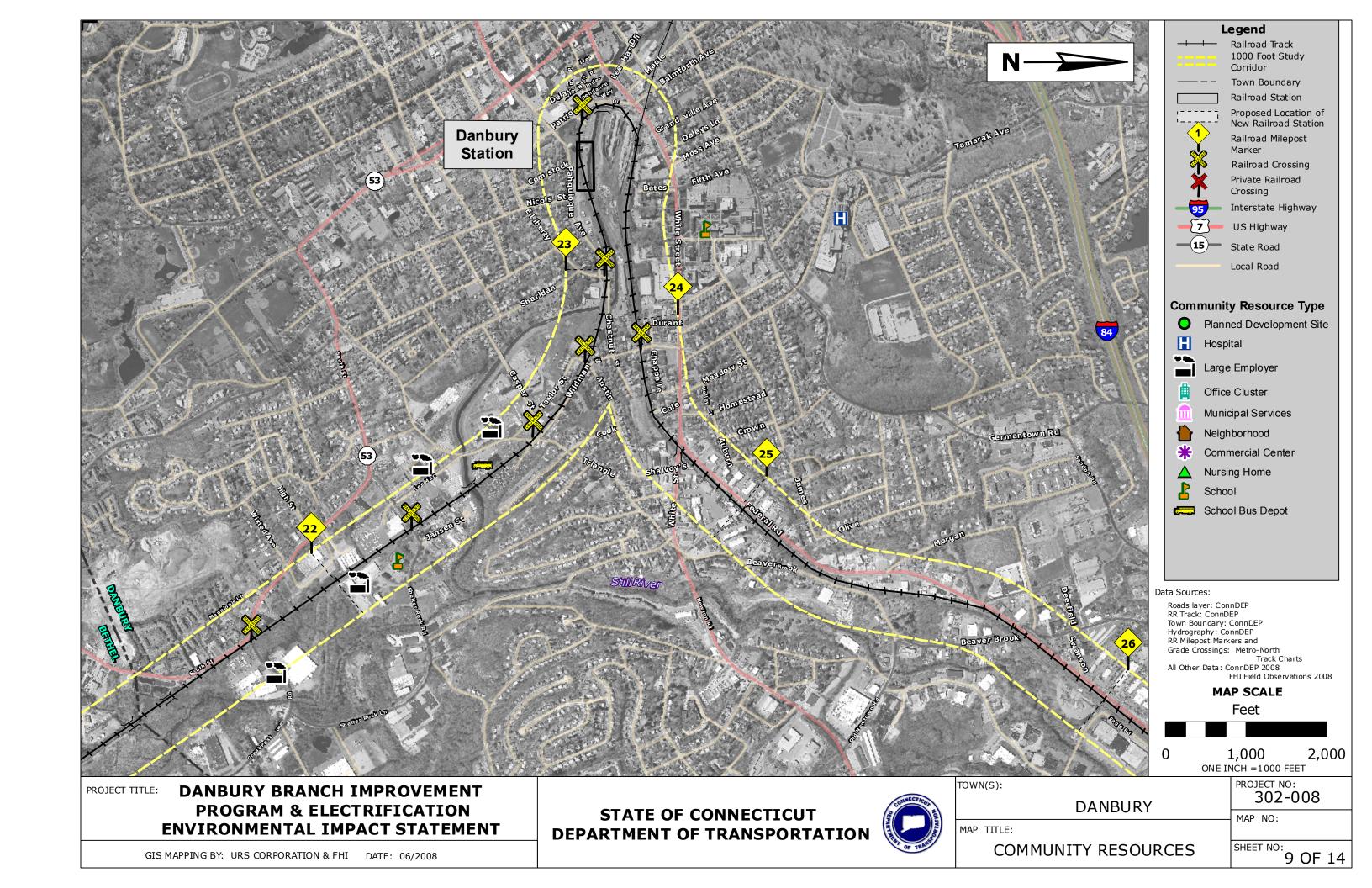


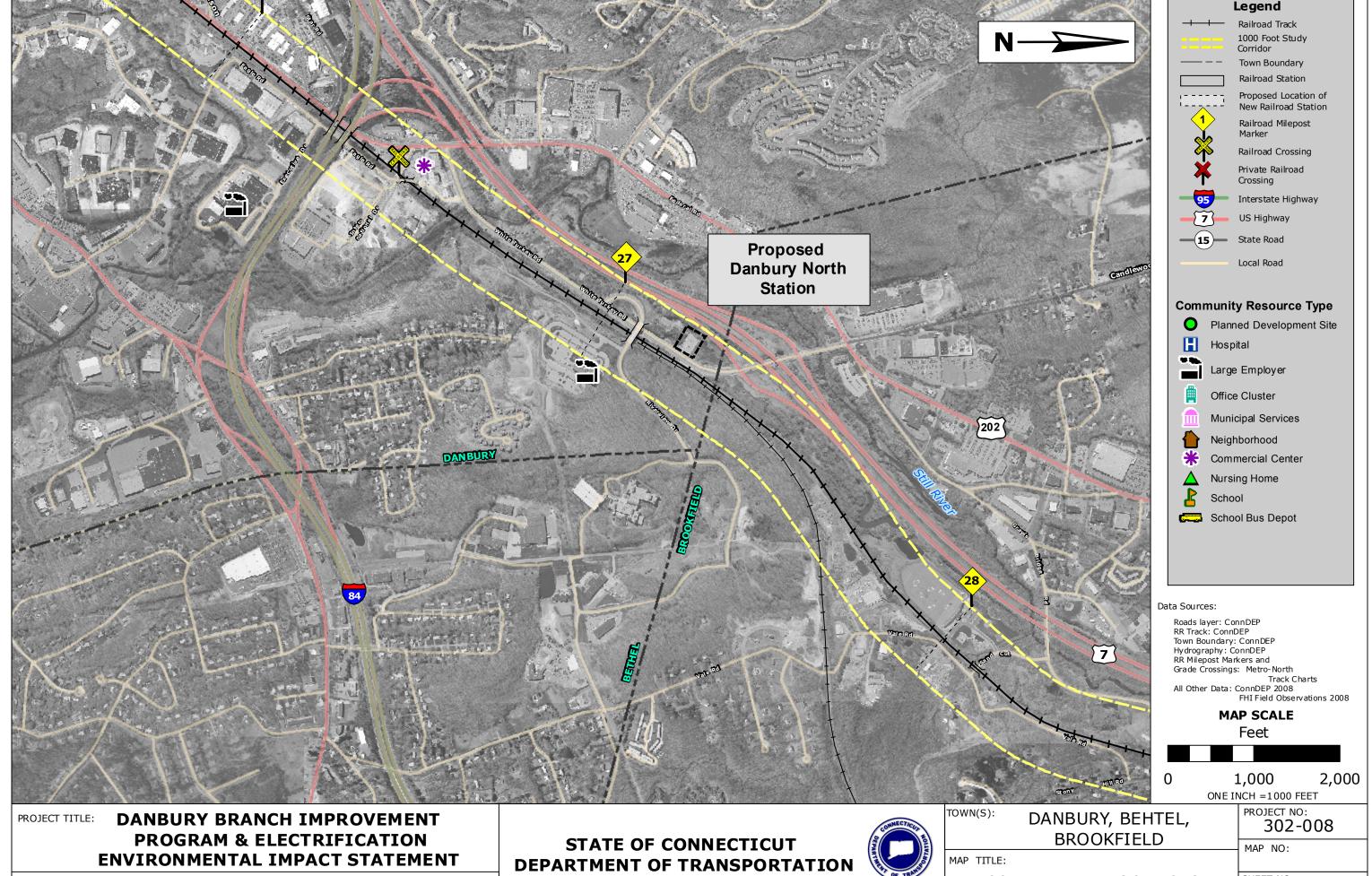
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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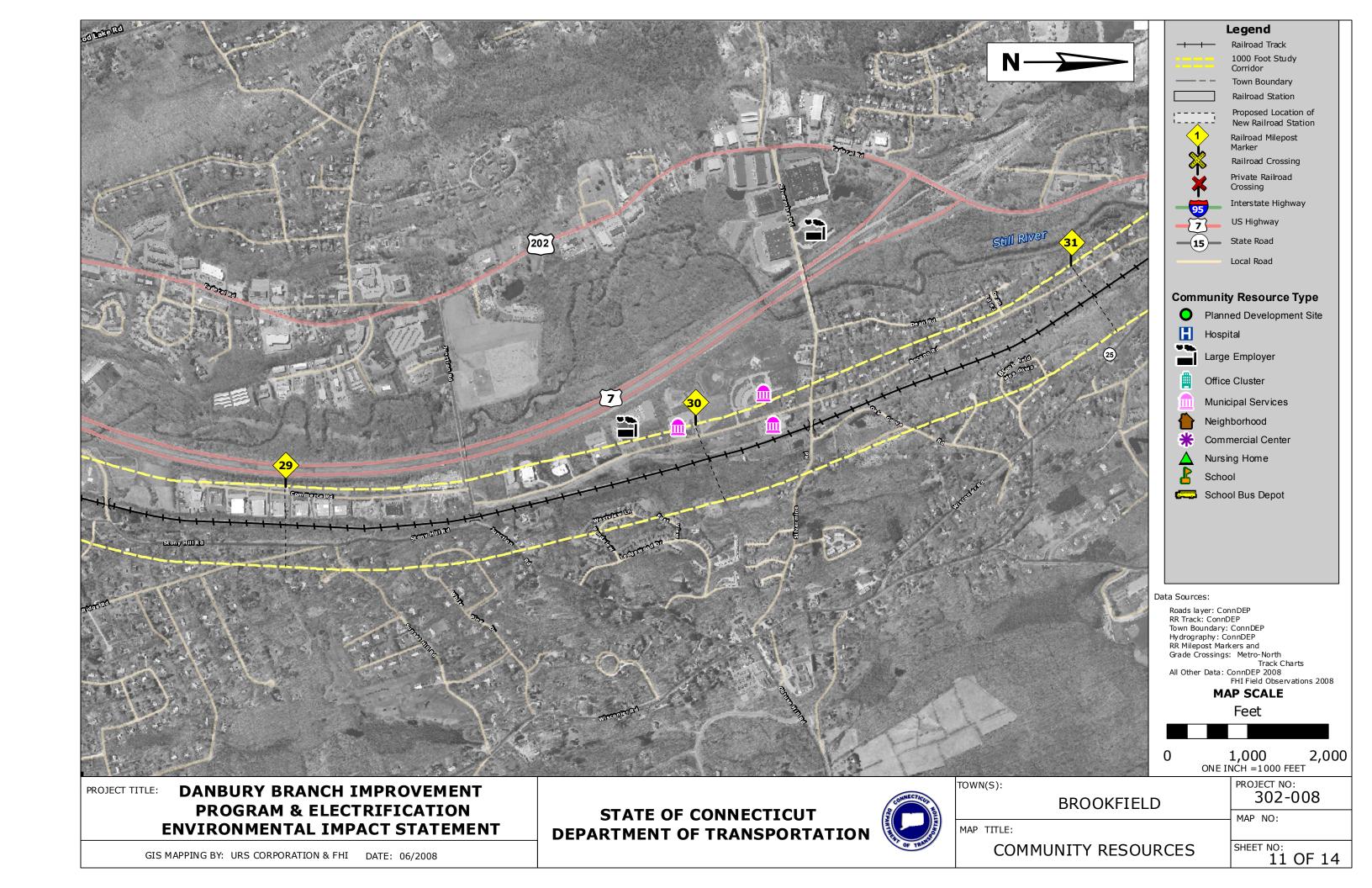


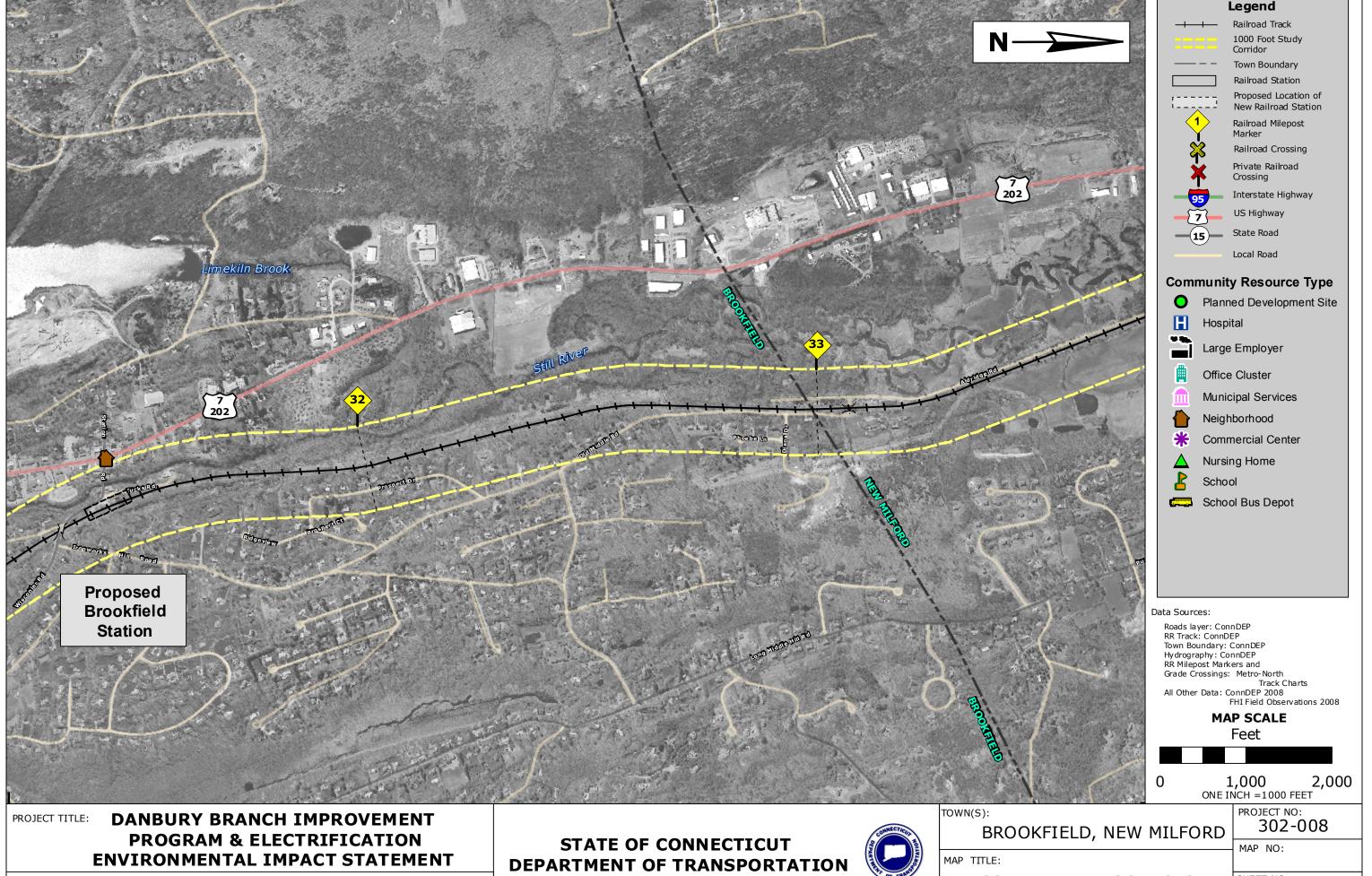




COMMUNITY RESOURCES

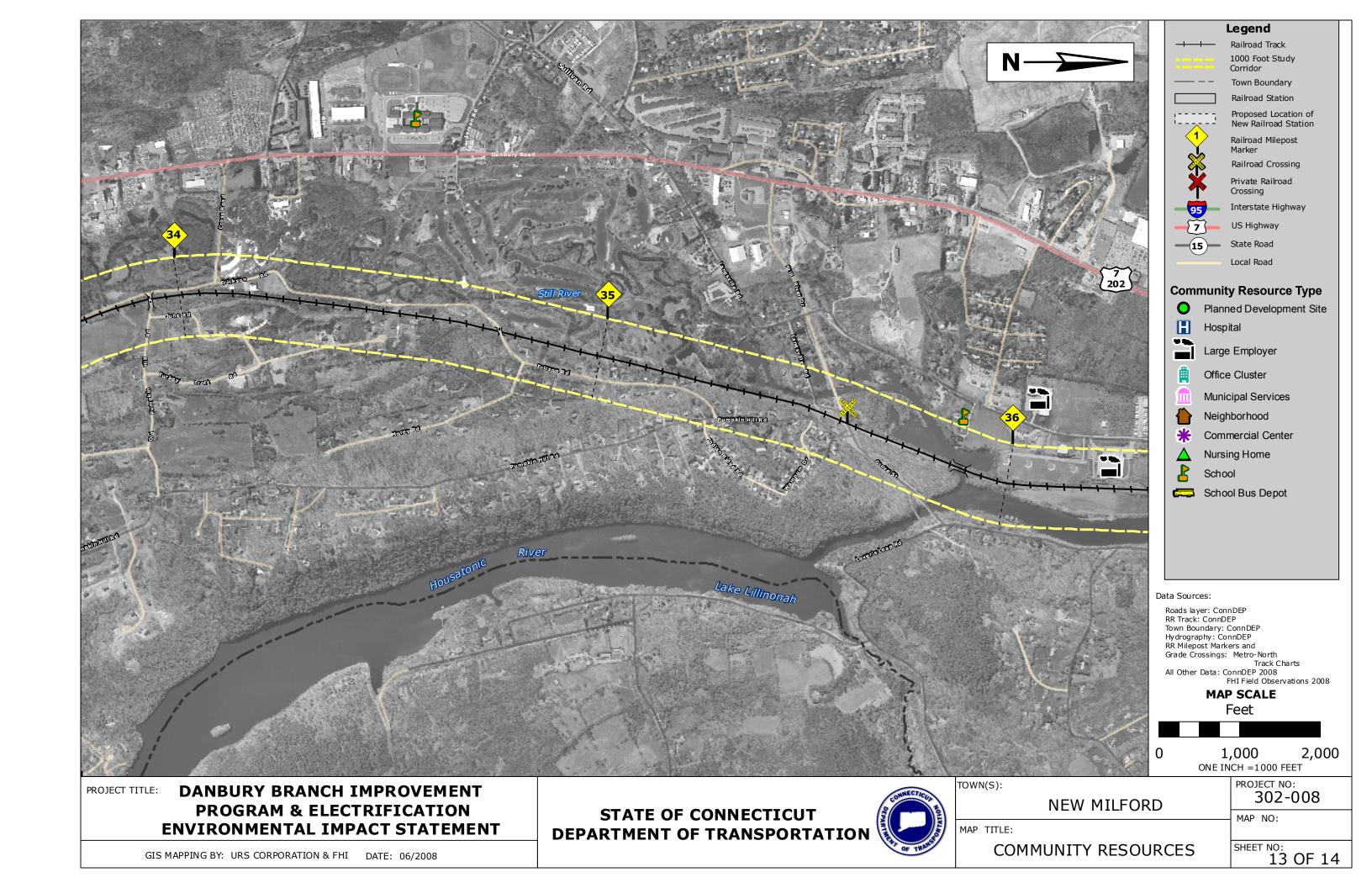
SHEET NO: 10 OF 14

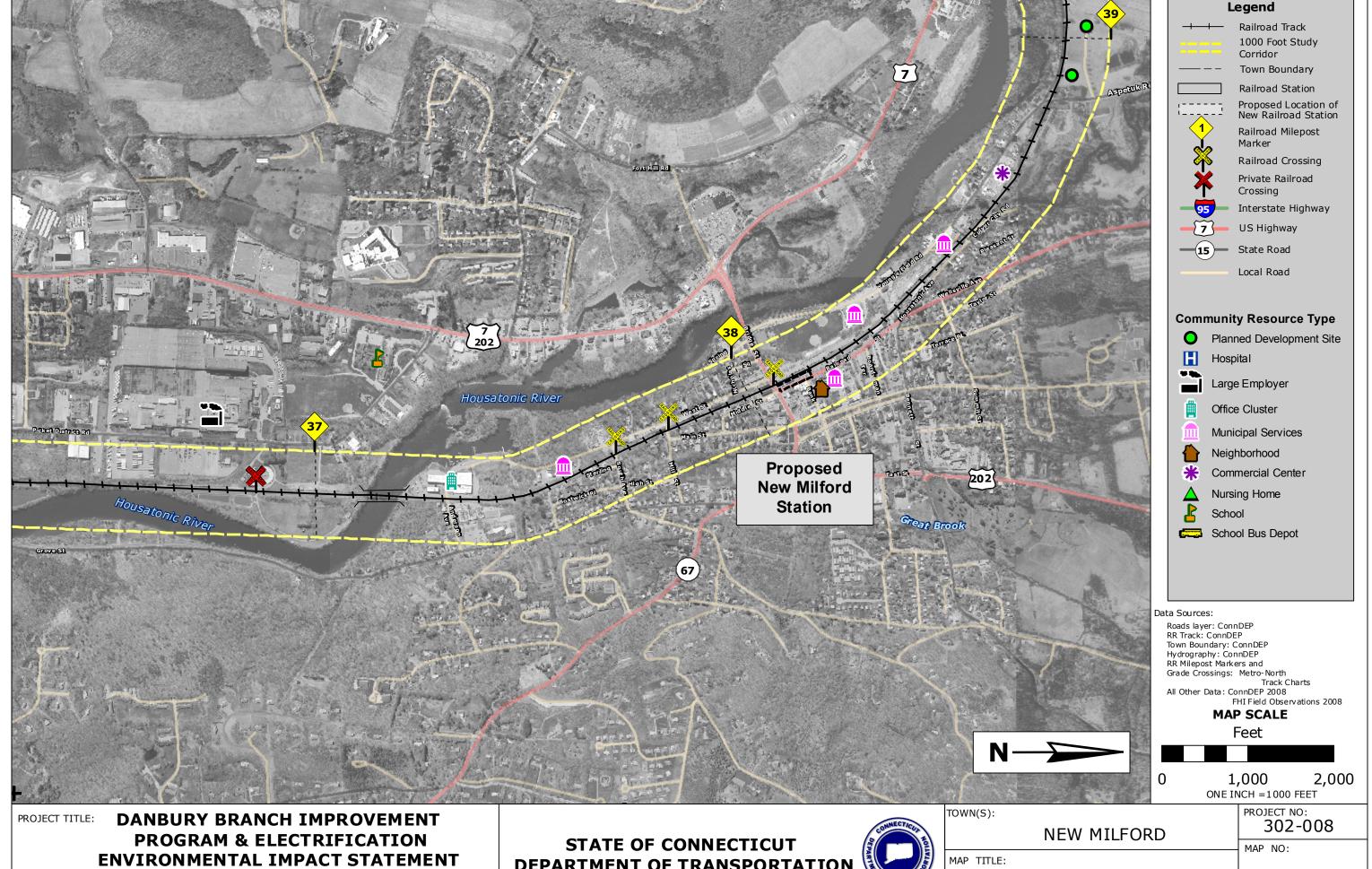




COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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